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A HOME WITH A VIEW

by

Grace M. Tripp

1885 - 1956

A story of the Tripp family, life, and times.
Colfax, Iowa - 1890-1910

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Uncle Billy making salve (story on page 3)



Back row, left to right: Eleanor, Dick, Father, Jesse, Mother, Milo, Em.
Front row: Grace, Leo, Arlie.



Father and Mother
on their wedding day
1867

D P'S

The day we moved to town was a milestone in my life, but at the time I didn't recognize it as such. Since I was only six years old, passing milestones was not uppermost in my mind. My chief concern was the possibility that in the confusion the men might forget to load my little red rocking chair. I tried to keep it in a prominent place, but the movers kept shoving it back while they loaded article after article of far less importance. I began to get panic stricken, for it seemed to me there was a concerted action to treat my little rocker with indifference. I was sure the wagon would be full before my most treasured possession received any consideration, and in my childish mind I could see us driving away and leaving it behind. If I spoke to any of the men about it, they paid no attention, just kept brushing it and me aside and talking among themselves. "We had better put that stove in next." "No, I believe that dresser will fit better back in that corner." "What about the beds? Shouldn't they be placed along the sides first?" I saw no reason why my little rocker shouldn't be placed first, and have the other articles packed around it, but my suggestions were unheeded. At the very last the men put it on at the top of the load and at such a precarious angle that I must watch it the long five hours' drive to town, to make sure it didn't fall off again. Fortunately, when we arrived at our destination, it was the first thing to be removed from the wagon. I carried it into the house and set it down with a sigh of relief. For me the long mental strain was over.

I have often wondered how all the human and other impedimenta of my father's menage were transported to town that day, and I have tried to reconstruct, in my mind's eye, a picture of the entire cavalcade as we moved along. There were ten of us in the family of human beings, and the minimum amount of stock and equipment which my father considered essential to the establishing and maintaining of a home in town.

My best guess is that Father and Mother led the caravan, in the one-seated top buggy, driving Whippoorwill and Moscoe. Leo and Arle, the little ones, probably sat at their feet behind the dashboard. It is likely that Jess, the oldest boy, driving Lize and Nell, drove the wagon carrying the household equipment. Em, next older, rode with him on the wagon seat. I was taken in charge by Em, and rode between her and Jess. I conjecture that an obliging neighbor had loaned us a wagon which was driven by Clarence, aged thirteen, in which the small stock was carried. I suspect that Dick and Milo, the middle boys, rode on a board laid from side to side on this wagon bed, their feet dangling down among the audibly resistant pigs and chickens. By turn these two boys must have had as their duty the driving of two milk cows which brought up the rear of the procession. I conjecture this because I am told the average cow does not lead especially well. In all probability the whole caravan had to stop at frequent intervals to rest the cows, for whom a twelve mile constitutional was an unaccustomed and strenuous ordeal.

Of course, those who happen to read this book will insist it is more logical to believe that each equipage forged ahead at its own particular rate, or were brought to town at different times. I like to believe we all kept together, so that Father could keep a weather eye on our progress and make sure everything was under control.

When Colfax saw this parade of D P'S approaching town, it is surprising that a vigilante committee was not sent out to meet us at the border, either to turn us back or demand proof that we would not become a charge on the city exchequer. That is what would very likely have happened a half century later. As it was, I doubt if our colorful procession produced even a ripple of excitement except in the immediate neighborhood where we finally pulled up, disembarked, disentangled the human cargo from the melee and installed ourselves and goods in the Austin House.

Seeing the little red rocking chair safe and sound in its new home, I went out exploring. There, outside the yard, I found a narrow "floor" made of boards extending along the side of the street, as far as I could see in either direction. It was most intriguing. I first walked, then ran, up and down, back and forth, on it in front of the house, gradually venturing farther and farther until I could see around the corner of the block. There, to my astonishment, I saw the same sort of structure extending as far as I could see in both directions at the side of that street also. People I had never seen before kept

passing me without a glance in my direction. Some of them entered houses which lined the streets on both sides. Buggies and wagons kept passing at frequent intervals along the street. It was a strange new world, and therein lies the truth of the fact that I was passing an unrecognized milestone in my life.

It was this day that life really began for me, as my remembrances of the events up to this time are rather few and vague. I am conscious of the fact, for instance, that on the farm there were always people around besides our family. Father had built a little extra house for overflow, a sort of "guest" or "tenant" house. This house was always full. Some came to work. Others came and stayed for indefinite periods while they were temporarily unhoused. Some came for extensive visits. There was Cousin Charley, Uncle Jo and his last wife, Cousin Jim, Cousin Allie, and Uncle Dave. There was Aunt Mattie, fat, with a sharp, incisive manner of speech, entirely belying her habitual good humor.

Of all our guests I liked Cousin Jessie best, especially after my third birthday when she brought me the little gold band ring, embossed with a design of golden leaves. I gazed at the ring continuously for days, and adored Jessie with shy, happy, awesome glances. Jessie was something special anyway. She was a little older than any of us, and lived in a fine house in town. She had pretty clothes and finger rings, gold breast-pins and dangling earrings.

But Mother always kept her fingers well crossed when Jessie appeared upon the scenes. At one time, I am told, when Jessie was about twelve, she conceived the idea of piercing Em's and Eleanor's ears. She thought, I suppose, that it was high time the two little girls prepared themselves for future adornment. Jessie never bothered to inform the public of her plans, so, before Mother realized what was going on, the operation on the two docile and unsuspecting small victims was accomplished. All Mother could do then was to bathe and annoint the incisions, dry the tears of the two little girls, and admonish the aggressive and temporarily contrite Jessie to watch her forward step. The next day Jessie terrorized the young girls by rolling her eyes and pretending she was going crazy. There was another session of admonitions and belated expressions of repentance.

At other times, Mother said, Jessie was of real assistance. She kept the children out from under Mother's feet for hours at a time by "teaching school." She would gather the group together, seat them on boxes or stools, and proceed to instruct them in readin', writin' and 'rithmetic. She always appointed herself the teacher. It was immaterial to her how weary the children became. She propped them up and insisted that they continue the game until she herself was tired and ready to dismiss them.

One of the most colorful of our itinerant visitors was my Father's Uncle Billy. I always managed to be on hand when he used the boot jack to remove his felt boots. Even with the boot jack, shedding the boots seemed to be a laborious achievement. He would insert the heel of his boot in the forked end of the boot jack, and with much pulling and hauling and puffing and grunting he finally achieved his purpose. Winter added to his difficulties, since during that season he lined his boots with paper, an effective insulation against the cold.

Uncle Billy snored explosively when he took his naps. I liked to watch him. His mouth would gradually fill with air like a huge expanding balloon, which finally broke open with an explosive, whistling sound much like that caused by the bursting of bubbles in boiling mush.

So far as I can remember, making "Uncle Billy Salve" and caning chairs were practically the only contribution that Great Uncle Billy made to the family industrial life during his long intermittent sojourns at our house. The salve was a hard, sticky black paste which smelled like tobacco. When Mother said she was out of salve, Uncle Billy became the most important person in our establishment. He would go to town on the next marketing day, and to the accompaniment of much smelling, feeling and tasting, would select and purchase the various ingredients for the salve. Next morning he was up with the sun, building his outdoor fire, measuring and stirring up the mysterious compound. I well remember how he looked, with his flowing white beard and his long white hair,

and inevitably wearing his high felt boots. He would bend over the black kettle, stewing and stirring the concoction for hours. He, and he alone, knew when it had attained just the proper consistency and could be pronounced "done" and ready for removing from the fire. He boxed the finished product in round tin boxes, and triumphantly passed it out to all the relatives and friends in the vicinity, a year's supply of precious ointment designed to soothe and heal, to draw the poison from all wounds, to protect from lock jaw and other possible consequences of the inevitable cuts and injuries and burns suffered almost daily by one or more in a large family. A little dab was spread out on a clean white cloth. The spot was heated to soften the salve and it was applied to the injured member. The wound was kept wrapped with clean white cloth, and tied securely with a thread for several days until Mother pronounced it ready to be exposed to the air. Once Clarence lost a finger on the chopping block. Father picked him up bodily, held the finger in place, rushed to the house and applied the miraculous healer. The finger grew to place again, slightly crooked, but still a good functioning digit. Without sterile bandages, or adhesive tape, or mercurochrome or iodine, our sores all healed promptly and without mishap. We were either just "tough", or there was really some healing, antiseptic quality in "Uncle Billy salve." The secret of its contents and preparation died with its producer. Mother had to guard carefully her last supply, which was not exhausted until we were far enough past childhood so that we stopped going barefoot and lived in town where we were not exposed to so many hazards in the form of rusty nails and jagged pieces of glass and tin.

At the time, as Uncle Billy sweated and stirred and puffed and fumed over the black mixture, we youngsters failed to appreciate his pharmaceutical contribution to the family. We were wont to disturb him as he stirred, by grabbing his cap or pulling his beard or hair, or hitting him as we dashed past. We loved to hear him fuss and fume. He would say, "Tarn sarn it all! If you children don't let me be, I'll tell your Pa." But he never did. He stayed with his own children part of the time, but always came back for long visits with us. I guess when he was away, he missed the pestering horde. Anyhow, he must return at intervals to replenish the salve boxes.

I remember the wide expanses of the farm. By the time we left, Milo was a big nine year old. He could be trusted to look after me, and with certain restrictions we could race over most of the farm, the orchard, the barn yard and even the wood lot. Milo never told me when he was starting out on one of his expeditions. He wouldn't. He just made sure that I saw him start out and he knew I would "tag" him. We sallied forth, while the two little ones pressed their faces against the spindles of the gate and watched us depart. They were confined to the half-acre which made up the yard for their "playpen." Milo never let me in on his plans for the day. I was just a satellite. Maybe we would visit the June apple tree in the barn yard and feast on its delectable red fruit, then maybe race to the orchard where we gathered green apples from the time they were as large as hickory nuts. We sprinkled these with salt from the barrel at the barn and devoured them core and all. The greener and more sour they were, the better we liked them, and, amazingly, the better we thrived. We supplemented our between meal snack of green apples with stocks of pie plant, gooseberries, and other sour, puckery fruit in season.

Before we were through exploring, we usually visited the garden. At its lower edge there was a tree whose branches were matted over with grape vines so thick that the older boys could climb the tree and lie down on the interlaced green mass. They told us they had a house up there. How I did wish for the time when I should be big enough to climb that particular tree! Milo and I had to solve our housing problem by bending over a small tree near by to sit under, or we raked up leaves and made walls for a house of many rooms. These were such a poor substitute for the marvelous house we could imagine in the branches of the other tree.

Sometimes we visited the high stockade where Father kept his stud horses. In awe and fear, we gazed at the massive animals through the cracks between the boards of the fence.

The hay mow furnished us with a first class rumpus room. We could climb around on the rafters without fear of falling, for we knew that if we made a misstep the hay was there to receive us without hurts. We purposely climbed to great heights and then jumped into the soft, yielding hay. We "rissled" and shoved one another in rough house fashion. We played hide and seek among the mounds of hay.

Sometimes we came across nests of eggs in out of the way corners of the hay mow. If the hen, who thought she had effectively hidden herself from marauding hands, were "sitting" on the nest, she would look and act so belligerent that I would not go near her, but Milo had learned how to grasp her by the tail, lift her and throw her from the nest. Thus dispossessed, she made no further effort to protect her interests, but would run away, squawking loudly, and leave us the pleasure of counting the eggs.

We always started out early when the hay was to be stored in the mow. The men drove into the driveway with great loads of it. A gigantic fork would descend and take a huge "bite" of the hay. The fork was attached to a system of ropes and pulleys to which a horse was hitched. The fork man would call out, "Ready." One of the boys or men, waiting for the signal would sing out, "Giddap." As the horse was driven to the opposite end of the barn yard, the fork of hay would ascend to the ceiling, and switch itself off onto a track which carried the load into the mow. At the proper moment the clamps would be released and the fork would give up its load. Other men or boys here mowed the hay away into various parts of the mow. Then the horse was driven back, the rope was pulled back through its pulleys and the fork returned to the load ready for another "bite." It was hot, close work "mowing" away the hay, and Mother always came down to the barn at intervals during the day bringing a pail of "ginger" to keep the men from becoming overheated. "Ginger" was a home made drink, concocted from cold water, vinegar, sugar and a little bit of ginger. After the men were satisfied, if there was any of the beverage left, Milo and I could have some too. It was most delicious.

Once, in spite of restrictions and watchful eyes, Milo got too near the block and tackle, took hold of the rope while it was being pulled out, and his hand was pulled into a pulley. The result was a badly scared parent, a frightened little boy and a mutilated finger which remained stiff and crooked the rest of Milo's life. After this incident, Milo and I temporarily lost our roving privileges.

What I don't remember about my farm life, or didn't even observe with my six year old eyes, was the anxious expression which for some time before moving day had been developing on the faces of Mother and Father, nor did I realize in the slightest that the depression of the early nineties was driving us to town. In later years I discovered that Father had been holding his stock, expecting that prices would eventually return to normal. Instead of that, they continued to sink lower and lower. Good milk cows were selling for fifteen dollars, horses for little more.

I was sorry when old Bar, the beautiful stallion, for some unknown reason, lay down and died, and when Wiggington Lyon, his successor, did likewise soon after. I didn't realize then that my father had paid a thousand dollars or more for each of these animals, and that their loss added materially to his gray hairs and sleepless nights.

Father might possibly have weathered the storm as others did, had it not been that a phrenologist happened along. Arriving unannounced at dusk one winter evening, this foreign looking man with his walrus mustache presented himself at the door and asked for lodging. I doubt if anyone was ever turned away from our doors, but this man promised extra inducements if we would permit him to stay. He would "read Father's head." With seemingly expert fingers he solemnly explored the surface of Father's skull. When he had finished, he spat in the ever present spittoon, sat down, rubbed his hands together and said, "Young man, you would have made a good lawyer if you had had the educational background."

I am not sure how much faith Father had in the possibility that one could actually determine characteristics and abilities by examining the bumps and hollows on one's skull. At the time, I do not doubt that the average person believed this a possibility. At any rate, the reading served to set my father thinking. Of all his interests, law held first place. He had acquired in some way a copy of the Code of Iowa which he had studied with unflagging interest and absorption until he almost knew it by heart. As a result, neighbors of the vicinity would drive for long distances to secure legal advice from him at our home.



Thus, the suggestion made casually by the phrenologist struck a responsive chord in Father's heart. To become a lawyer seemed to him the ultimate in human achievement. Father thus came to the decision which culminated in a final sale and moving day. Less courageous people would have considered the move out of the question. Father had only a meager common school education. He was forty-two years old. He had a family of eight children to support. He had no money. He hoped to be able to retain the farm, but so far as bread and butter returns were concerned, at present, with a major depression in progress, he must view this property as a liability rather than an asset.

He talked it over with Mother. "I can do it," he said. Mother was apprehensive. She plaited her apron with nervous fingers. "I'm afraid," she said. "I can't see our way." "I'll manage," said Father, with contagious confidence. "General Weaver has agreed to let me study in his office." "But it will be three years before you can be admitted to the Bar" replied Mother, anxiously. "I know," said Father, with assurance. "but in the meantime I can assist other lawyers. I can try minor suits before a Justice of the Peace, and in between times," he said. "I can write insurance."

But on moving day, as I took up my vigil by my little chair, and as later in the day I marveled at the sidewalks and the rows of houses, and the numerous strangers, the implications of our abrupt transplantation to a new and different life registered not at all in my childish mind.

CHAPTER II

"Pa" and "Ma"

My parents called each other "Pa" and "Ma", and that is what they taught us to call them when we were youngsters. When we arrived in town, we found that those terms were not being used "By the Joneses." Leo promptly converted to "Papa" and "Mama." But to me, my parents were never "Papa" and "Mama." These terms seemed too spineless and insipid. Neither were they "Mother" and "Father," terms used to designate parents in books, not my type of parent at all. My father didn't like to be called "Dad." He considered that term disrespectful, in the same category as "The Old Man." So I had a life-sized problem on my hands. I didn't care to be out of step with community practices, but nothing else except "Pa" and "Ma" seemed to fit my particular brand of parents. These terms denoted strength and vigor and potency. They had a distinctly pioneer flavor. So I kept on through my childhood with "Pa" and "Ma," but avoided using the terms in public as much as possible so that I would not appear backwoodsy among my associates. In time my folks grew into the kind of parents better suited to the appellations "Father" and "Mother," or perhaps my connotation of the terms underwent reconstruction. Anyhow, in later years I was able to use those expressions without restraint. In my heart I still think "Pa" and "Ma" were best for them, and in this respect I feel some regret that the family did not maintain the tradition with which we began life.

We did not appreciate Father and Mother when we were growing up. We didn't think they were good looking. Mother wore her hair too plain. She just parted it in the middle, combed it flat to her head, gave it a slight twist in the back to channel it up to her crown, and rolled what little was left into a small coil. One hair pin was sufficient to anchor the coil. When others were using loads of hair pins, it was amusing to hear Mother, when hers was misplaced, say, "Where is my hair pin? Who knows where I put my hair pin?" Eventually we would preface any question as to a lost article by saying, "Where is my hair pin? Who knows where I put my hair pin?"

When we were youngsters I have a feeling that Mother wasted little precious time "making herself up." Wearing a plain hair dress and simple clothing saved valuable time for more important duties. In later years she liked to tell of the time when Clarence said to her, "Ma, why aren't you one of those fancy ladies?" "Fancy ladies," said Mother, somewhat taken aback. "Just what do you mean by fancy lady?" "Why, this kind," he said, and the little boy pursed his lips, tilted his head, and nodded it stiffly from side to side in perfect imitation of our banker's aristocratic wife.

We didn't like it that Mother was so small, less than five feet tall. She could stand under Father's outstretched arm, for he was a good six feet tall, and large. As a couple they were all out of proportion. Why didn't they consider this important factor when they were planning to get married? The discrepancy in size was so noticeable that in Des Moines or other towns in which they were not known, people would turn to look at them as they passed. That was most embarrassing to us when we were youngsters. It made us feel conspicuous. Most mothers, we observed, were at least of average height. Why couldn't our mother have grown just a few inches taller, or else have chosen a man her size - - proportionately?

Her diminutive size was a distinct disadvantage to her in many ways. In a world constructed for people who could measure up to five feet four or taller, she found herself unable to reach articles on high shelves without running for a chair, and her poor head was always colliding with open cupboard doors, which were apparently just the right height at the lower edge to escape her notice but not her head.

"But," we used to say, "little but mighty." She could manage us. Even when the boys were grown, she had her way of seeing that they did what she asked them to do. If they made objections, she would grasp them by the arm, pinching up a small amount of tender skin on the under side. The boys would howl with pretended pain and permit themselves to be led to the assigned task. They loved it. The spectacle was incongruous - - this pint sized woman marshalling along a robust, full-sized man and requiring him to do her bidding.

As for Father, he wasn't as particular as we thought he should be about his person. He wouldn't bother to have his hair cut until it got so long it would curl up around the edges. His forehead was high, and he parted his hair from high forehead in front to the neck line in the back, brushing the few wisps of hair to the sides where they curled up around his ears. He didn't always keep the creases pressed in his trousers, and his coat was sometimes rumpled. But on Sundays and on state occasions, Mother took Father in hand, and saw to it that he was scrubbed behind the ears, as it were. When his hair attained a certain stage, she would say, "Pa, you must go to the barbershop." A visit there would accomplish an amazing transformation. The barbers with professional pride changed his "hair dress" and his appearance in general. At such times we were willing to agree with Mother that he was quite a handsome man. We were really quite proud of him when Mother dusted him off and got him ready to attend a convention. He nearly always took Mother with him. We knew that if she were along, we need not worry about his keeping his hair combed and his tie straight, and we were sure that if he decided to make himself heard, he could make a good and convincing talk. He had a gift for speech. It disturbed us somewhat that he retained in his vocabulary a few of the grammatical errors inherited from his pioneering days on the farm, but even we could see that in spite of this, his English was of a colorful, impressive and most convincing variety. At any rate, we knew we always came out second best in any argument in which he opposed us.

Even so, in spite of our recognition of Father's superiority in these and other respects, it was only after I had seen William Jennings Bryan and heard him speak that I was inclined to reconcile myself to Father's indifference to careful grooming. If anything, that famous gentleman seemed a worse offender than Father when it came to keeping himself smoothed out. I was so enthralled at the time with Mr. Bryan's famous "crown of gold" speech that grooming seemed of small consequence.

It was about that time that I began to appreciate the fact that Mother had a considerable number of superior qualities and that plainness and diminutive size were matters for slight concern.

Another respect in which we were short-sighted as children, was that we did not appreciate the fact that our parents were congenial. We took it for granted. "Weren't they husband and wife?" Congeniality just naturally went with husbands and wives. Didn't they select each other from a whole world full of people?"

As we grew older we learned that our conception of parents was slightly in error in this respect. It was then that Father and Mother let us in on the secret

of their compatibility. My Father, as a farm hand, had seen so much wrangling among couples that he had decided by the time he was eighteen years old that he would never marry. It just wasn't worth it to go through life in an atmosphere of bickering and irritation.

His resolution was short lived. It was about this time that he happened to stop at the school house one hot day for a drink of water, and here he saw a charming little girl with a gingham sunbonnet pulled down over her sober face. He was disturbed later to find he couldn't seem to keep her off his mind. Some days afterward he went to his sister's place to work and found this adorable sunbonnet girl working for her board while she attended school.

I know nothing of the ensuing courtship except the denouement. Inadvertently the story of this slipped out. It seems that Father froze his feet while at work one day, and was in such pain he couldn't sleep that night, so Mother sat up by the fire with him all night to apply soothing applications to his feet and to help him forget his miseries. They never meant for us to know this. No, indeed! An all-night vigil such as this would have been strictly taboo for us, even in a good cause. Anyhow, it was the night of the frozen feet episode that Father not only forgot his miseries, he forgot his commendable resolutions about remaining a bachelor.

He was still determined to do his best to avoid the quarreling and bickering, so he made a pact with Mother. He said that everyone became irritable and unreasonable at times. "So," he said, "let us make each other a promise that if one of us becomes cantankerous, the other one will remain good natured." I don't know what they planned to do if both took a notion to display their ill-nature at the same time. I presume whoever gave expression to it first had the right-of-way. Anyhow, I can vouch for the fact that the arrangement functioned effectively through a period of fifty years, through depressions and good times, through periods of sickness, of death, through all the vicissitudes attendant upon the rearing of a large family.

I have at times seen Father so irritable that I thought if he belonged to me, I would have to speak out my mind. Mother only smiled at him. On the other hand, I have seen Mother pouty and unreasonable, her mouth set in a grim, straight line. At these times Father was more than usually kind and considerate. He gave no signs of observing her unreasonable irritation.

I suppose psychologists of today would say their congeniality was a major factor in giving the members of our large family the feelings of security we always enjoyed. It was a precious heritage.

After the incident of the frozen feet, we were told, the wedding was not long delayed. When Father finally made up his mind to do anything, he usually did it with dispatch. He wanted to get married forthwith. He did not permit the fact that he had no money to stand in the way. Wasn't he strong and willing to work? Couldn't he do much better financially when Mother was near to help him, and why should she be cooking and washing dishes for his sister when she might be keeping up a home for him?

So Father borrowed sixty dollars and bought himself an elegant black suit of clothes worthy of the occasion. Mother contrived to make herself a black skirt and a high necked white blouse, with long bell-shaped sleeves fullled in at the cuff, and with a row of small black buttons down the front. She bought herself a small hat with a veil. Then this eighteen year old boy with his bobbed hair, red nineteen year old fiance went to Newton to the home of Judge Howe to be married.

Father must have had a few cents left after the ceremony. The bride and groom celebrated the rest of the day. Each had a dish of ice cream at the drug store and then they went to the photograph gallery where they were carefully posed for a tin type picture. Mother's hat was removed and carefully deposited on her left knee, veil outspread. Father had his left hand spread out on his left knee, at just the proper angle. The fingers of his right hand were inserted under the left lapel of the coat of his elegant suit.

It is safe to say that having thus pictorially recorded the event for the benefit of posterity, the young couple drove back through the cool of the mid-summer evening to my aunt's home, donned their working clothes and took up their respective tasks. It had been a great and momentous day!

In one respect my father was a most satisfactory parent. When he was engrossed in thought, he was absent minded and unobserving. If you have not had that kind of father, you will never know what an advantage it can be.

He did not pay too much attention to the training of the children, but there were a few rules he laid down. One was that we were not to "run" the down town streets after school, another was that we should not go to the depot to see the train come in. To be unable to do these two things was a grievous deprivation for us. All our friends did those things, and to us they loomed large among the most desirable activities of the day.

It was so exciting to see what was doing down town, and we were so intrigued with the activities at the depot. Tourists and health seekers were always arriving on crutches, and departing some weeks later on their own. Various hackmen were standing beside their horse-drawn vehicles calling, "Fry Hotel," "Hack to Grand Hotel." "Take bus here for the Old Mineral Springs," "Mason House," "Hotel Ryan." People were bustling about getting their baggage from the checking room. Some were boarding the train, others the busses. Finally the brakeman would call, "All aboard." The train would pull out. The loaded hacks would depart with a flourish, and we would walk back to town. Who would want to miss such exciting events, especially when the show was free?

But Father didn't like for us to be "parading" in public places. He had conceived the idea that for young people to make a practice of going to the train or to walk the streets was somehow demoralizing.

We soon found out, however, that, although he had put his foot down about the matter, when we did occasionally partake of the forbidden fruit, he never saw us. We could pass him on the street, but he would be walking along with his head down, in deepest thought, and never know that he had passed a child of his who was out on a spree that was taboo. I highly recommend that anyone who is looking for a first class parent choose one who is absent minded. From my point of view the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.

Father was filled with intellectual curiosity. He read a great deal, and he learned everything there was to learn from those with whom he came in contact. He was not only a great talker, he was a good listener. Having had little opportunity for formal education, this trait stood him in good stead. If he had a task to do, he either drew on his stored-up information or he made it a point to find and talk to people he thought knew more about performing that particular task than he did. When comparatively young, he knew a considerable amount about bridge building, farming, blacksmithing, plumbing, surveying, cement and brick work, painting, mechanical manipulation. His ability to deal with complex problems in arithmetic was uncanny. We could never understand how he could figure out in his head such a problem as "twenty-five times forty-eight" and give the correct answer while we were getting our pencils and papers ready to solve it.

He was quick to adapt his knowledge to the things he wished to do. If a law suit involved exophthalmic goiters, he soon knew almost as much about them and their effects as the doctors who were called to give expert testimony. If a law suit involving injuries received from a collapsing bridge was in preparation, he had at his finger tips a workable knowledge of the facts with regard to the effective construction of a rigid supporting structure, and what was necessary to oppose the stresses and strains incident to the passing over the bridge of vehicles and machinery of a given weight. He could talk

to the jury intelligently about hamie straps, single and double trees, mold board, plows, harrowing, marketing and breeding.

This ability to speak the language of the jurors, coupled with his natural convincing power of speech accounts, I suppose, for his successful career as a lawyer.

It was not alone in the court room that Father's disposition to observe and store up knowledge was of value. At one time it became necessary to clean out our cistern. The problem that presented itself was how to empty it of its 1200 gallons of water. To use the hand driven pump would have taken hours of laborious effort. But Father knew the principle underlying the action of the siphon. He reasoned that since the garden was lower than the bottom of the cistern, a long hose could be used as a siphon to accomplish the emptying process.

One morning he set the gadget going. He had a gallery of wide-eyed spectators as he filled the hose with water, corked both ends, placed one end under the surface of the water in the cistern, the other in the garden below, and then contrived, with the assistance of the boys, to extract the two plugs simultaneously. The water began to pour down upon the garden.

That evening when Father returned from the office, he went immediately to inspect the cistern. It was empty. During the day we children had kept running down the hill at frequent intervals to see if the amazing device was still functioning. We were not a little puzzled to see the water running on hour after hour, no fuss, no bother, no noise. Father said that it was air pressure that caused it to do so. That didn't mean anything to us. It was easier, then, for us to imagine the hose filled with tiny little sprites or pixies who obligingly sucked the water up and over the high point in the hose.

Later when I took a course in physical science in high school and the phenomena of air pressure were revealed to me, I thought the truth more amazing and interesting than the explanation we had conjured up with regard to supernatural spirits. As I studied further in science and became convinced that happenings in the world were never determined by black cats crossing one's path, by walking under ladders, by breaking mirrors or by coming in contact with the number thirteen, I breathed a deep sigh of relief. It was good not to have to worry about those things any more. After all, eleven children, plus two parents, make thirteen. Who was it suggested that the truth would make one free?

Mother was full of maxims. I doubt if she thought at the time she was using them that they made much impression. She would be surprised if she knew that we still remember them and that even today, wholly uninvited, they rise up to confront us and circumscribe our actions. Without ever having formally studied psychology or philosophy, Mother gave expression to some of the outstanding tenets of the subjects. She said, "Good discipline means giving precept upon precept." "The best government is the least seen," "Never permit a child to know that you mistrust him." My pedagogical training was thus initiated in my childhood.

Though Father was a great talker, Mother said little. She was Spartan in her nature, and she expected us to practice the same philosophy. If we fell down, she would say, "That doesn't hurt. Don't waste time in crying. That's a big girl." She didn't fuss over us much when we were sick. We were never permitted to say we were nervous. In fact, she tried her best to keep it a secret that we possessed nerves at all. We had to learn to disregard our hurts and scratches. She would wrap up our fingers with "Uncle Billy salve" and tell us we would be all right. If she had any special concern, she failed to show it, so that we came to think no physical injury or indisposition

really amounted to much and, following the application of "Uncle Billy salve" or some other simple home remedy, everything would be "all right."

I realize now that we had good, normal, above-the-average parents. As I have grown older, I have felt that we had much reason for congratulating ourselves that we didn't have the misfortune to have drawn the "problem" variety. It must add considerably to the difficulties of growing up to be possessed of parents who present "behavior problems," and who are in general "emotionally unstable." To be unable to depend on "normal reactions" from parents must make it most difficult for children to deal with the problems which inevitably confront them.

CHAPTER III

Come Eleven

Parents are handicapped from the first with regard to satisfactory rearing of a family in that they have no chance to choose the family personnel. Each time, my parents had to send in a blind order, as it were, and take us as we came, the general run of the mill. If we had been on display some place with IQ's plainly marked, and with ratings on will-temperament tests available in the office of the wholesale establishment, it is possible they could have selected a better grade of raw material, and that their task of rearing us might have been considerably lightened. However, I must say that Father and Mother seemed quite expert in taking whatever came to them and in making the product over, so that in time it fairly well came up to their specifications. At any rate, they made us think that they were pleased with us. I never knew of their offering to give any of us away because they were nervous and we disturbed their sleep, and there wasn't one of us they ever turned over to the state for disciplinary purposes. It did not even seem to occur to them to send us to our grand parents to provide intervals of respite for them to repair their frayed nerves.

There was no rhyme nor reason governing the way in which we put in an appearance. Father must have desired a son first. Most men do, especially farmers. But instead, three girls arrived one after the other at two year intervals. Father began to be worried. Then there were five boys. I imagine even Father felt vaguely disturbed to observe this excessive masculine invasion, for Mother always said, "When it comes to work, one boy is a boy, two boys are half a boy and three boys are no boy at all." According to her theory, future potential help for Father on the farm was to be distinctly negative. When I arrived there was much rejoicing, in spite of the fact that I was the ninth arrival. My older sisters were particularly exuberant, a girl at last, a baby sister. The girls were so tired of seeing boys arrive in an apparently never-ending stream. Next came a boy and last a girl, to complete the family of eleven children. After that the stork passed us by. Father and Mother must have scanned the sky with apprehension every time they saw this long-legged bird pass over our house with his small bundle en route to other homes in the neighborhood.

The first problem that presented itself for solution was that of naming us. It must have been quite a bother to select a brand new name every two years until eleven were bestowed on as many little new human beings. To make the task all the more trying, choice was considerably circumscribed by a theory about names held by my parents. They believed that the purpose of a name was to distinguish one from all other individuals, and hence they had no particular wish those who could day off bestow a name as common as, for example, John or Harry, especially if there were contemporaneously ones. It would be assumed there were in Carroll or Argonne. In fact, in our immediate vicinity, there lived out of six boys of my age in a family, were named John or Harry. Mother had only suggested that in all likelihood if a girl should put in an appearance, she would be called "Davidetta." It now is apparent that Father and Mother did not see the job so poorly, but as we grew up most of us felt that we had been done a disservice. We could have done much better. I always felt that in our family, the greatest amount of strain and trouble must have been given to naming the first child, who, unfortunately, never lived to enjoy her pretty name. I used to look at the inscription on her small tombstone and wonder if she had been the unfortunate one to have received the name. I mean the one who was David, but a girl.

substantial manly name, but he died in infancy too. Grief had come early to the young couple who were my parents. The name Eleanor May wasn't too bad. Then according to our viewpoint each name for the most part became progressively worse than the one before. We used to quarrel over the question of who had been most abused in this most important respect. There were Emma Belle, Jesse Thomas, Clarence, Myron Robert, Milo Weaver, Minnie Grace, Arlie James and Leo Josephine. By the time it became necessary to bestow a name on the last one, Father and Mother were just too weary to assume the responsibility. They turned the job over to Em. Leo was too small and inarticulate to register any complaint at the moment, but from the time that she arrived at the age of accountability and discrimination, she never quite forgave Em for taking advantage of her infantile condition by fastening the name "Leo" upon her. She became quite articulate about it in later life. The name is, after all, more masculine than feminine. When Mr. Lufkin told her that Leo meant "lion", that apparently was the last straw. What girl wanted to be a lion? So once when Leo removed to a new community she decided to change her name. She considered nice, high sounding names like Leota, Leontine, Leora, but finally settled on her second name, Josephine, which was after all a good name, and of no uncertain gender. But such a revolutionary procedure as changing one's name in our family was not easy to accomplish. One had to be rather strong-minded to be able to withstand the barrage of ridicule which was bound to result from such an attempt. I may say that Leo stood her ground and you will find her registered in some parts of the country as "Josephine." In other parts she is "Leo." I hope for the sake of possible legatees that she will die without property. I dread to think of the endless affidavits that would have to be made out to prove that in all her various guises she is still one and the same person.

Few of us continued through life with the name given to us in the beginning. If we didn't do anything else, we changed the spelling. When the craze for inserting y's came along, we followed the crowd. Grace became "Grayce" for a time. Arlie was changed to "Arley," Milo was spelled "Mylo" and Emma even became Emmy, or Eminie Lou, later shortened to "Em." Myron Robert never grew up to be Myron. He was "Dick" for all practical purposes, "D. Myron" later for business purposes. The name "Dick" evolved. When he was a youngster, between escapades, he was always found sleeping in all sorts of unheard of and impossible places. When he was nine years old, he fell fast asleep in the driveway of the barn and was quite incensed when, not knowing he was there, the "hired man" threw hay down on him and then tramped on him as he descended from the mow. It was at that time that one of the family classics was initiated. As Mother dried Dick's tears, between sobs, he threatened to run away, go out west and not return until he was married.

We never permitted Dick to forget this childish threat. Referring to this threat was one of our ways of "getting his goat." Anyhow, the hired man dubbed him "Snoozer Dick" after this event. Later he became just "Dick." The name "Minnie Grace" was a source of much disturbance to me. I was supposed to be called "Grace," but it was considered, I presume, and with justice, that "Minnie Grace" was more euphonious than Grace Minnie, so Minnie Grace I became, without consideration for the agony I should endure when I went away to college and found myself addressed as "Minnie" in classes, and by correspondents. I thoroughly disliked the name of "Minnie." Besides, being called that at college made me feel as if I had lost my identity in a world which at first was a strange and lonely world anyway. So I finally insisted on being the less euphonious "Grace Minnie" and my name and I lived happily ever after.

As I look the situation over now and analyze it, I feel that, after all, there were in various ways, some rhyme and reason to our naming. Such odd and in some cases, ugly names did distinguish each of us effectively from all other individuals. Then, it will be observed that the first two names were of the two syllable variety. It seems to make sense to me now that when Father and Mother contemplated the number of children that were in the offing, and the number of times they would be compelled to say each of these names, that they should drop down to two or one syllable names. I am not sure they figured it out by mathematics, but it is safe to say that they saved themselves the pronouncing of at least a million syllables by that simple expedient.

My parents were of the practical and efficient type. I sometimes used to wonder why, when they found themselves embarked on such a child rearing career, they did not promptly go the whole way and reduce all to one syllable names. I believe I now know the reason. Father really needed three syllables for disciplinary reasons. Two would have done, but one was entirely inadequate. In ordinary conversation one would have sufficed, but when Father really found it necessary to show us that he meant what he said, every syllable was an asset. He would say, "El ea nor" in a way which left no question as to his meaning. As a rule, speaking our names in that tone of voice was all the weapon he needed to employ to subdue us. Two syllable names like "Jess e" and "Em ma" served his purpose very well but try as he would, "Grace" could never be made to express his ultimatum as effectively as the others. I have a feeling that one trial convinced him that with the continuation of the practice of giving one syllable names, all discipline would completely disappear from the family life.

One way we had of "getting one another's goat" was to play up the despised part of the other's name. When the rest discovered that I disliked "Minnie" they would call me that at the most inopportune and embarrassing moments. Furthermore, they persuaded all their friends to do likewise. Another way of "goat getting" we practiced was making rhymes with each others' names. We said, "Eleanor May fell on the hay and couldn't get away until Peter Willie Hay came riding in the sleigh and took her off the hay," and, "Emma Belle fell in the well and went to _____". We were not allowed to complete this one except under our breaths.

All of this to-do about names never seemed even to be noticed by Father and Mother. I presume what seemed so vital to us was a problem of minor importance to them among so many which were major. But as for me, no one need every say, "What's in a name?" I am positive that a rose would never smell so sweet if it were known as "Skunk" or "hydrogen sulphide."

In the caravan that migrated to Colfax that fall day of the nineties, there were only eight youngsters. By the time the last little girl arrived and for the time being meekly accepted her name of "Leo," the family had begun breaking up at the top. By moving time, Eleanor had finished the first phase of her teaching career, begun at sixteen, and was married. Father left her, her young husband and infant son Gale as tenants to care for the farm when we moved to town.

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Gale, Harold and Lois grew up later with the rest of us. Gale was two years younger than Leo. The other two came along to Em and to Eleanor at two year intervals. We scarcely knew whether they were nieces and nephews, or brothers and sisters, since circumstances made it desirable for Gale and Lois to live with us a considerable part of the time, and Harold made frequent cyclonic visits. Harold and Em lived for a number of years in the home of Harold's paternal grandfather of New England extraction. As I grew up I loved to visit there. Everything ran smoothly and systematically in their home. Em insisted that I should help Aunt Dea wash the dishes, but after that I had little to do. I could, if I were real quiet, visit the big library where Mr. and Mrs. Lufkin sat reading, select a book from those that lined the walls, ceiling high, and bury myself in its pages for the rest of the day, or until I was called away to eat and to wipe those stacks of dishes again. I felt I had to pay far too high a cover charge for my eating. Aunt Dea insisted that it was an imposition for me to have to help with the dishes. I didn't dispute her statement, partly because I didn't know what the word "imposition" meant, but mostly because I felt whatever it was, I agreed with her. Still, bird-hearted Em insisted that I should consider dish wiping my special job, so I had to continue to waste much of my precious time that way. Em said I should have told Aunt Dea it wasn't an imposition at all, that I was just glad to do it. But I wasn't.

There was nothing unpredictable or haphazard about the Lufkin household except Harold. He didn't at all times conform happily to a systematic, orderly, New England procedure. His genes from the Tripp side of the house were all wrong. He reacted more favorably to a middle west, wild Indian atmosphere such as we maintained at our house. After one of his visits at Colfax, Em nearly always had to discipline him in the attempt to convince him that when he was in Rome he must do as the respectable Romans did.

These three youngsters had to take the knocks with the rest of us. Gale and Harold fitted themselves in comfortably with the other five boys. Lois, ten years younger than I, became my special golden haired protege. The three became a valuable supplementary addition to our family.

It did not at all times seem an unmitigated blessing to be a member of such a large family. As we grew older, there were those piles of potatoes to peel, those stacks of dishes to do. After an especially heavy dish washing assignment once I complained to Mother, "How nice it must be," I said, "for those people who have just three or four in the family." "Why, Grace," she said, "we don't have a one to spare. Of the girls, Eleanor is the dignified one. Em is the fun-making girl. You are the girl always under foot with a book. Leo is the baby girl. Of the boys," she said, "Jesse is our oldest. Dick is the rascal, Milo is the quiet one, Arle is the lovable one, the baby boy. It takes every one to make a well rounded complete family. Do you see what I mean?" I didn't see and didn't agree with her immediately, but as I wiped off the tables, I considered her words. Yes, I guessed it would be quite boring to have a family with just a quiet one, or just a book worm, or just a lovable one, or even a combination of the three types. I had to admit I wouldn't know which one of our family to delete. Besides, from my point of view, wouldn't it have been tragic if the "book worm" had failed to materialize?

CHAPTER IV School Begins

On Monday after moving day we started to school. It was raining. It is doubtful if the Tripp household could boast of even one umbrella to protect them from the downpour. To be adequately covered that morning would have required six umbrellas, one for Father on his way to the office, one for each of five children, schoolward bound. The umbrellas of that day were huge affairs, I should say well over three feet in diameter. Two sedate, considerate and tolerant individuals could have managed very well with one umbrella. Since none of us was sedate, or considerate, or tolerant, to "double up" under one umbrella was not feasible. I can't imagine any of the five boys putting up with being poked in the head by protruding umbrella ribs, or taking kindly to have a stream of water trickling down his neck while the other fellow held aloft the umbrella and presumably attempted to protect his partner from the rain. Besides, I have a feeling that the boys would have considered it unmanly at that time to have been seen with an umbrella. Remembering them as I do, I can see them drawing their coats around them, pulling their caps down around their ears and "slipping between the droos" as they raced the five blocks or more to school.

If the four boys considered it unmanly even to carry an umbrella, what embarrassment and shame any of them would have experienced to have been seen escorting me, their small sister, to school, especially this first day when they would be meeting all sorts of fellows! But I had to be protected. I was a little girl. The problem was solved when Irwin, a six year old gallant from across the street, offered to take me with him under his umbrella. In later years I was told that the windows of both houses were full of admiring, chuckling faces watching the small oblivious couple as far as they could see us as we started in the direction of the school.

Irwin led me along those intriguing wooden side walks for several blocks, trudged me up the steep hill and into the first grade room, where he turned me over to Miss McLaughlin, probably with a feeling of relief that his obligation was fulfilled.

How wonderful town school was! There was a whole room full of children just my age and size. Mother had seen to it that I was equipped with a brand new slate, bound with red felt which was secured to the slate with over and over stitches of black thread. I looked around and found that no one there had a more beautiful slate than I had, though some of them did have double ones that were hinged together. I had a long new slate pencil wrapped with red, white and blue striped paper. Mother had given me two slate rags, one for washing my precious slate, and one for drying it. In my surreptitious glances around the room, I discovered that some of the children had small sponges with which to perform the washing operation. I determined then and there that I would ask Mother for one of those that very evening.

We sang a little, repeated the Lord's prayer in unison, and then Miss McLaughlin gave us little ones some coarse needles and thread and some cards with holes in them outlining a design, the picture of a cat or a dog or a person or some other object. She showed us how to outline these with colored thread. Then she began calling classes up to the front to recite. Those who were left behind were expected to keep very quiet as they sewed or studied. There must be no whispering or idleness. I could not resist a few stolen glances to the front to see what was going on. Finally the "chart" class was called. Irwin motioned to show me that was my class, so I went up with the others and stood in the circle around the chart while Miss McLaughlin pointed out the letters and words and syllables we were supposed to learn. I had mastered all my ABC's at home and I knew a few words such as "dog," "cat," "man," and a few phonetic syllables such as "a-b, ab," "i-p, ip", "a-n, an." I was very attentive and consequently it did not take long for me to read sentences like "I-see-a-cat," "I-see-a-dog," "The-man-sees-the-cat." The day when I was promoted into the first reader class was a big day, comparable to, if not exceeding in importance any other promotion or commencement day in my later life.

Some of the classes on that first day were number classes. The children counted, and they gave simple combinations, repeating very formally in a set pattern, "Two and two are four," "Three and three are six." In that day children couldn't reason until they got into the fourth grade, so little attempt was made to count actual things or combine actual objects. Our work was largely abstract and meaningless.

We had spelling lessons, repeating the words first, spelling them orally and repeating them again. "Cat, c-a-t-, cat." The letters were most important. Words came next in importance. Sentences and meanings were not for beginners. Meanings came along as a later development. There were no flash cards, no dramatizations, no projects planned and executed by the children, no observation trips, no creative drawing, no class room games. At the age of six we spent the day studying, reciting, doing "busy" work, keeping very quiet, not turning to right or left, not dropping our pencils.

I was puzzled to see the children, from time to time holding up one or two fingers. The teacher would nod at them and they would leave the room. After a few minutes they would return and take their seats. I was too bashful to try it that first day. In a few days I did. But I didn't know what to do. I wandered around the halls for a few minutes and returned. Later I felt glad that Miss McLaughlin had not followed my movements that day. She would have thought I was gaining privileges under false pretences.

At recess and closing time we followed definite militaristic signals. "Books aside." We put them in our desks. "Position." We sat straight in our seats with our hands folded on our desks. "Turn." We turned and put our feet into the right hand aisle. "Rise." We did so. "Pass." We marched by rows to the out doors, keeping step to the clapping of the teacher's hands. The week passed in like manner.

Friday afternoon I was chagrined. I came to school with my usual pig tails, and wearing my usual plain gray print long-sleeved apron. I found most of the children all blossomed out with curls tied with colorful hair ribbons, and wearing their "Sunday" dresses. I was puzzled and asked one of the dressed up ones why she didn't wear her regular school clothes. "Why don't you know?" she asked. "Friday afternoon is when we have our 'program'." Sure enough, after recess Miss McLaughlin gave the signal, "Books aside," "Position" and the rest of the afternoon was spent in singing songs, speaking pieces, matching and listening to Miss McLaughlin read. It was a welcome change from our regular schedule, but I was upset, for there I sat in my old gray apron looking conspicuously drab and ugly. I determined that another Friday would not catch me thus. And it didn't. In the years to come our programs became more varied. We added compositions, and exciting contests such as spelling and "ciphering" down.

At recess on that first day, and in the days to follow, I learned to play most interesting and exciting games. Among others was "Old Witch." The favorite characters in this game were the "mother" and "the witch." The rest had to be children who were left at "home" to await the dreaded entrance of the "Witch." At her approach the children, by previous instructions, would run out in mock terror with cries of "Mother, Mother, the tea kettle is running over." That was the signal for the Mother to rush home and deal with the offending witch. If the old witch could manage to kidnap some of the children, she did so.

We played "Blind Man's Buff." A member of the group, the "It", was placed in the center of a circle made by a group of children joining hands. Some one would rotate the blind man so that he presumably lost his bearings. With groping hands outstretched, he would walk forward until he came in contact with some shrinking member of the circle. If by feeling, he could name the person encountered, that person in turn became "It."

"Black Man" was played by forming two lines of children facing one another at some distance. The "black man" took up his station between the lines. From time to time children in either line would attempt to make their way to the safety of the other line. If one screaming, panicky individual were captured by the black man in "No man's land," the captive became a "black man" too and had to remain and assist in the capture of the other children.

We played "A B C, Squat Where You Be," "Hide and Seek," "Drop the Handkerchief." Sometimes, in a quieter mood we made crowns with large long hickory leaves. We would break off the stems to be used as pins to fasten the leaves together. We braided long-stemmed white clover blossoms to make crowns and wreaths. We dressed up in hats made of large pie plant leaves. We stuck cockle burrs together to form odd-shaped objects. We spent hours making houses by raking up rows of leaves to form the walls of a play house.

We continued these as neighborhood games at home after school and after supper, and we always regretted the time when darkness fell and we would hear Mother call, "Come in, now, wash your feet and get ready for bed." Foot washing, performed in a tub in the kitchen, was a nightly ritual, as we always happily shed our shoes as soon as we got home from school. Even so, we considered the foot washing a superfluous and tiresome job, but Mother had different views with regard to this nightly rite. It was very rarely that we could elude her and make our way upstairs and to bed without first paying our respects to the wash tub which blocked our way in the kitchen.

It was after such a day as this, that first day of school, that, flushed from exercise and happy play, we reluctantly responded to Mother's summons, did the prescribed foot washing, trooped upstairs, undressed, and climbed into bed. Mother came and read some verses of scripture to each full bed. We said, "Now I lay me down to sleep," snuggled comfortably in bed and immediately dropped to sleep. What a wonderful world it was! It was well that we did not fully understand the implications of the little prayer since I now found myself in

such an interesting world. I am sure I would have been much disturbed at the thought that there was a possibility that I might die before I waked. At that time it would have been slight consolation that, if I did die, the Lord might heed my petition to "take my soul."

CHAPTER V

A Home With A View

From the time I can first remember, Father was always either planning a new home, or actually building one. Poor Mother was not a house builder, and she wearied of the constant upheavals. As for me, I was intrigued with house building from my childhood. Some of my earliest recollections are of evenings around the dining table where I sat drawing house plans as Father worked. He would inspect one of my finished productions and give a short laugh. "Where will your stairway be?" he would say, and "What about your chimney?" "When you can show me, Grace, that you can get your stairways and chimneys in properly, then I'll think you are a house builder." I decided that I would immediately set myself the task of proving my ability in house building. Ultimately, with his assistance, I did learn to plan a chimney so that it did not intrude itself into the middle of the room above. I could plan a stairway according to his standard, which meant a six inch riser and a ten inch step. I was able to manage to allow sufficient space so that in actual construction even a man more than six feet tall could be relieved of the fear of having his head forcibly collide with the floor as it jutted out above.

"Believe it or not," through Father's interest in my clumsy efforts, and his patience, I learned to get as much pleasure and satisfaction from scale drawing as I did from other games. "Keep your houses square, Grace," my father suggested, "and plan no ells or projections. You'll save on your walls and foundations." I puzzled over this statement. I didn't understand why there would be a saving, but I did not resolve the problem in my mind until years later, when in a mathematics class I learned that "given a certain perimeter, the area of a rectangle approaches zero as it becomes longer and narrower." I was just storing that information away as just another abstract principle to be remembered, when all at once it came to me, "That explains Father's statement about the square house." I began to experiment. Sure enough, I found a house twenty feet square requiring eighty feet of wall would have a floor area of four hundred square feet. Using the same eighty feet of exterior wall, making the house long and narrow, a rectangle, say twenty-five feet by fifteen feet, and one would have a floor area of only 375 square feet. I stretched the rectangle lengthwise still further and in my imagination constructed a freak house thirty-nine feet by one foot. I found my floor space would be surprisingly reduced to thirty-nine square feet. This was getting interesting. I could easily see that by decreasing the width more and more, the area would not only approach zero; in infinity it would reach it. I thought to myself, "Isn't life amazing--especially the mathematics phase of it?"

I experimented with a circular house. I called to mind the πr^2 formula, and found my same eighty foot wall would enclose over 500 square feet of space, much more than a square house. I wondered if Father had known that fact about a circle, but decided in the negative. Otherwise, I am sure he would always have lived in a circular house.

I have a hazy remembrance of the house on the farm as it was when we lived in it. It was, of course, a square house, and it was built on an elevated portion of the farm with a fine outlook to the west. Father always built on a hill so that he could have a "view."

The farm house was of the story and a half variety, well built, but just a collection of rooms, sans closets, sans plumbing. It was inadequately heated with a wood burning heater in the living room, plus a wood burning cook stove in the kitchen. Water was carried in buckets from the well perhaps two

hundred feet away. Wastes were carried out. The water bucket on a bench in the kitchen and the "slop" bucket on the floor were standard articles of equipment for houses of that day.

It is interesting to conjecture what it meant in terms of time and effort day after day to carry enough water for drinking, cooking, dish washing, scrubbing and bathing for a family of thirteen or more, and then to carry it out again in the form of waste water.

It is small wonder that one day a week only was set aside for baths. Traditionally, bath time was Saturday night in most homes. With our large family Saturday night was not sufficient. We had to initiate the splashy ordeal in the afternoon. A boiler of water was heated on the kitchen stove. A wash tub was brought in and placed in the middle of the kitchen floor to serve as a bath tub, and the weekly ritual began. By the time clean clothes and towels were laid out, baths taken, skins rubbed to a fine glow, and day time or night clothing put on again, at least a half hour must have been consumed for each bathee. At that rate six or seven hours would have elapsed in our family before the thirteenth victim had completed his ablutions. Only then could the fire be allowed to die out and the boiler and tub be hung back on their respective nails outside the house.

Foods at the farm were "refrigerated" in the milk house by the well. The foods were set in a tank presumably kept filled with cold water. During the long Iowa summer this water, in spite of numerous changes, was perversely inclined to become warm. Then the milk and cream, in the same perverse spirit, became sour. The refractory butter melted down to an insipid yellow oil. Besides, it was a real chore to travel all that hundred yards whenever one required a cup of milk or a tablespoon of butter. In spite of all such minor inconveniences in the culinary department we could not justifiably complain. "We have enough to eat," Mother said, "Don't fuss if it isn't always just like you want it. Remember, the tank might be twice as far away as it is." "And," she continued with finality, "If anyone is really hungry, he can eat good bread and butter." "We're lucky," she went on. "Fifteen years ago there was no flour mill at Clyde. In my Father's family we had to grind our own grain." That was a long speech for Mother to make. We sat up and took notice.

However, it was in the town houses that I grew up and it is those I remember best.

Our first home was rented. We called it the Austin House. It was, I suppose, an average house of the times. Today it would be difficult to rent any sort of a livable house with the avowed intention of installing in it a family of eight growing youngsters, but in those days children had not become such a liability to the house hunter. If the landlord ever objected to our depredations, or if the neighbors complained about us or our noises, we never knew it. In those days, luckily for us, children were apparently accepted by the world as a more or less essential evil.

Almost immediately, Father began to build. He bought a cheap half block of land on a hill at the edge of town. It was undesirable as lots go, being nothing more than a sand hill, rough and rolling and treeless. But it had a "view" and Father could see possibilities in it for an attractive home. His faith that it could be transformed into a good place to live was later justified. Father and the boys accomplished the major part of the transformation. They hired scrapers and flattened out the surface. They built cement walks. They planted trees. Then the first of a series of six buildings, constructed at intervals throughout my childhood, was built. "Fort Tripp" had its inception. This first building was a barn. As soon as it was completed, anticipating the construction of the first house, we took up the Austin House and took up our abode in this new stable, still smelling of fresh, clean sawdust. Future stalls and grain bins and hay mows became kitchens and living rooms and bedrooms.

Our sojourn in the barn for the summer seemed like a lark to us children. From our point of view, living there had its points. We did not have to clean our feet so carefully when we came in. We could, and did, write with chalk all over the walls. Our contemporary song classic with which Milo and I adorned the walls in cramped childish letters was the popular ballad, "After the Ball is Over." Apparently, we were much impressed with the story of the shattered glass which symbolized the broken heart of the poor lover who had been jilted by his faithless sweetheart.

Sorrow came to me while we lived in the barn. Em was married and went to Newton to live. I was only seven years old, but I was heart broken and cried my heart out, for Em was my pal. I had slept with her. She combed my hair and looked after my interests in general. I was rather shy in my childhood and sorely needed such a champion.

I was totally unaware at the time that when Em came in from her social affairs on cool evenings she would move me over onto the cold portion of the bed and she herself would crawl into the spot where I had made it warm and comfortable. In after years she volunteered a confession of this perfidious practice. Even if I had known it at the time, if Em had done it, I would have thought it was all right.

The house built that summer was a nine room cottage. Father had come to the conclusion that it was not good for women and girls to climb stairs, so he set himself to what most people advised was an impossible task, building nine rooms on one floor. There was a parlor, a dining room, five bed "roomettes". a kitchen and what we were pleased to call a bathroom.

Life in the cottage was more luxurious than any we had known up to this time. My first recollections of a winter morning, as I came gradually awake, was of the noise made by my father scraping down the ashes from the big stove in the dining room. I snuggled down among the bed clothes, close to Leo, sleepily and comfortably enjoying the thought that I would not be called until the flames had made the scrolled cast iron of the stove red hot and the damper had been closed so that the heat would be thrown out into the room. By the time the fire in the kitchen stove was blazing, the tea kettle was starting to sing. Ash pans had been withdrawn with proper care to prevent excessive amounts of the fine wood ash from flying about the house, and the contents had been added to the pile accumulating near the barn. Mother was stir. I could hear her going from room to room closing windows and calling, "Time to get up," "Time to get up." I drew the bed clothes still more tightly around my chin, fully realizing that the time was imminent when our door would fly open and the unwelcome summons would come to us. It came all too soon. A few minutes later there was a ring of sleepy, yawning, stretching, slow-moving youngsters gathered around the hot stove, each with a pile of garments at his feet. Mother had to make several sorties into the dining room to hasten the process of dressing. She would say, "Grace, you have only put on one stocking since I was in here before," "Arlie, stop that fooling with the cat and get into your clothes," "You are all going to be late for school," "Remember, each of you has his chores to do," "Milo, will you see that Leo gets her shoes on the right foot, and help her button them?" Such admonitions given, she would scurry back to her work in the kitchen. Mother always "scurried."

It is good that pajamas had not been invented at that time. Gowns, under the circumstances, provided a much greater opportunity for privacy. We soon learned that by extracting our arms from the sleeves, one could dress under cover and finally shed his "chrysallis," emerging fully dressed from top to toe.

Water for washing was at hand--no bundling up to make a trip to the wind mill to fetch bucketfuls to the house. Father had constructed a soft water cistern close to the house and had installed a pump for it over the sink in the bathroom. He had piped the city water into the house so that a faucet dispensed water for drinking. Of course, if we wished warm water for any purpose, we had to heat it

on the cook stove in the kitchen. But who minded that when the stove was not more than ten feet away from the sink? Washing up was a minor problem anyway when all one had to do when he had finished up was to empty the wash pan into the sink and watch the water eddy and gurgle down the drain.

One still had to brave the weather to visit the small outhouse which had been constructed for our convenience not more than fifty feet from the kitchen door. This house was usually spoken of as the "reading room," though at times, in whispers, we called it by its rightful name. I was shocked when I first saw this word in print. The book I was reading said something about a "privy council." "What could have been the subject under discussion in such a council meeting?" I thought. I was relieved when I found the word meant, in a broad sense, "Secluded, not public," that it was not a word used exclusively to designate a small outhouse. By some cogitation I came to realize that the word must have come from the word "private."

Our little out door house was private only as far as segregation of sexes was concerned. We hooked the door to accomplish this. To accomodate our large family it was constructed with three "burners." (This designation was an invention of the boys). There were two high "burners" (too high, being man planned and constructed), and one low one for the little ones. The place was provided with a Sears Roebuck catalogue and other old papers which had outlived their usefulness in the house. There were always interesting articles which we had somehow failed to assimilate fully in the house. In the summer time, looking at the pictures and reading these articles kept us occupied for long periods. What an opportunity Mother missed by not having the walls of the place plastered with her favorite sayings. It would have been an excellent place for such a one as, "Lost yesterday somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours, each set with sixty diamond minutes. No reward is offered, for they are gone forever." And what good strategy it would have been to have provided the place with a regular book shelf stocked with works from Dickens or George Elliott or Shakespeare!

On Saturdays at the cottage we indulged in our baths with an exultant feeling of luxurious living. The water must still be heated in a wash boiler on the stove, but Father had seen to it that we had a bath tub installed under the attic stairway in the bathroom. The tub was made of tin encased in wooden frame work. Even though we had to carry water to use in it, at least we did not have to carry the water out again. The drain provided for that. Who of us then would have thought that a few years later the tenants to whom we rented the house, found no use for our fine tub and desecrated it by using it for a wood box?

In spite of the fact that Father had been advised not to crowd his big family into a one story house, we must have had plenty of room for, in keeping with the times, we kept the parlor shut off most of the time. It was little used except to provide a place for the organ and other excess furniture, and I made it serve as a place to which I could retire when I wished to read and cry over Beth's death and the death of little Eva. I knew that if I indulged in such emotional display before the rest of the family, I would lay myself open to a barrage of ridicule. Besides, by being out of sight I hoped to be out of mind, so that it wouldn't so readily occur to Mother to call me to wash the dishes or set the table.

I remember one occasion when the parlor served a peculiarly useful purpose, when Lois made her advent into this world more expeditiously than planned. I must say that putting in an appearance in such a fashion proved to be typical of Lois. That was only the first of a lifetime of expeditious acts on her part. But on that most important occasion I was relegated to the parlor, ostensibly to dust, a rather unusual task to assign to a child of ten in our family, but I was credulous and did not become suspicious until I heard the crying of a baby.

But now I can confess I didn't need to be relegated to the parlor to protect me from worldly knowledge, for, thanks to Em, I knew by this time that doctors did not bring new babies in a satchel and that storks did not transport them through the air in neat bundles to be delivered at the proper places. Em had modern convictions with regard to acquainting children with the "facts of life." Mother, though, did not know that I was so wise. That was a secret between Em and me. By common consent we two knew it was better not to tell Mother of our interesting and enlightening conversation. Mother would not want me to know about such things--yet. When one departed this life, the whole world could know, but when he entered it, he must do so surreptitiously and unannounced. Without doubt, even then, families who were marked for the advent of an infant had advance notice, but it was proper and fitting to keep the fact from the world as long as possible. A few women friends might, in hushed tones, discuss the coming event if there were no man and children around. If the prospective mother were at hand on these occasions, she would blush prettily and cast her eyes down to the little fine garments she was fashioning. If she were as modest as she should be, she would keep the little gowns and slips and dresses rumpled up in her lap to avoid the possibility that on-lookers, especially children and men, would discover what it was she was working at. When her appearance finally hinted at the state of affairs, she stopped going out, preferring to remain at home safe from prying, curious eyes.

As for me, as time went on, I found there was still much I did not know. I found new babies always came to papas and mamas. That seemed strange. I was beginning to want to know all the answers, but Em was at Newton, except at times when she came for short visits, and there was no one else to ask. It would have been nice if I could have talked it all over with Mother. As it was, I had to collect my information here and there by piece meal. I discovered the family doctor book one day, took it off to my secret reading place and tried to satisfy my curiosity from it, but the technical language was beyond my understanding. I could only get an inkling of what the book was talking about. The girls I ran around with apparently knew much more than I did. But most of them were one or two years older than I, and for some reason did not care to enlighten me. It was much more fun, from their point of view, to speak in riddles and suggestive language and then laugh at me because I did not understand them:

In one way and another, during this research period, I found that many of the girls and women of the day suffered from an intriguing malady called "female complaint." This served as a favorite discussion topic for women, but it, too, was another subject not suitable to be discussed before innocent children and men. The "wise" women would collect and discuss this affliction in low tones from behind cupped hands, a device mistakenly presumed to insulate effectively against transmission of sound. At times, though pretending to be reading, I overheard stray sentences from the discussion, before Mother waked up to the fact that I was very much there, and before she had opportunity to say, "Grace, run out and play for a while," but I heard enough to make me feel that the girls and women afflicted thus were somehow quite fortunate. Having this affliction set them apart in a semi-secret and most interesting manner. I half wished that I would "catch" this mysterious disease. Perhaps it would make me pale, and thin, and delicate looking, and perhaps people would be concerned about me and I would become the subject of one of these low-toned discussions.

I continued to pick up stray bits of such secret information in a more or less unsatisfactory manner, from listening in, from puzzling over words and phrases scrawled in out-buildings, but I did not arrive at complete and satisfactory and unblushable answers until I began to take biology courses at college. In the meantime Providence must have protected me from excessively morbid and psychopathic reactions. Anyhow, there was Lois. Now that she had safely arrived, I could tell all my friends about her, how we had knotted her up in a diaper and weighed her with the steel yards, and had found she weighed only five pounds, that she was so little she could almost be laid in a cigar box. I told what shiny red hair she had, how cute her little hands and feet were, and how tenaciously she clung to my finger when I offered it to her.

We gladly made room for Lois. With all her belongings she took up only a few cubic feet.

Now we had a luxuriously appointed home, and in addition to this we had a home with a "view". When we had guests, Father would say, "Come on out to the front porch and see our view." From the vantage point of the porch, one could overlook the houses on the flat and see far out to the west and north across the valley of the river. Father was well content--for a few years.

CHAPTER VI

We Live in the Cottage

Many important things happened while we lived "luxuriously" in the cottage.

During the first year the congestion was relieved by my spending the winter at Cousin Jessie's. Jessie was a young bride. She was always a gregarious individual. She didn't like to stay alone, and I think at this state of her life, she was still a little afraid of the dark. Conditions made it necessary that Shaffer spend a number of evenings a week at the bank, so she asked that one of us be permitted to come and live with her that winter. What one of us could best be spared? I can imagine that Father and Mother went into a huddle over this momentous question. They probably didn't actually line us up for consideration, but no doubt did abstractly consider each one on the merits of his particular case. Some members of the family had asset value. Milo couldn't go because he went after the cows. Dick shoveled the walks. Besides, I doubt if Jessie would have wanted Dick. He was always knee deep in mischief. After one of his escapades, Mother was wont to shake her head and say, "Poor Dick, Bad Dick, our wayward son!" Brother Jess milked the cows and took care of the stock. He couldn't go. Leo and Arle were still mere babies. They needed their Mother's care, and wouldn't be of much use in scaring off night prowlers anyway. Finally, by process of elimination the choice fell upon me. I was seven and a "big girl," but still not much of an asset in the family life. Not being an asset, I was without doubt considered a liability. So my meager wardrobe was packed and I went to take care of Jessie. I loved it. I had never before been so indulged. Jessie did my hair up in rags every night, so that I had curls. These hung loose in the back. According to the custom of the times, the front was parted in the middle, brought up tight and smooth to the crown of the head and tied with a generous bow of ribbon, usually red. Jessie made me lovely clothes. One dress was a red brocaded silk, made from an old one of hers, with a full gathered skirt, and with a bolero jacket, worn over a long-sleeved, cream colored flannel blouse. I suppose the new outfit and the softening curls were rather becoming to me. Anyhow, for the first time I felt comparatively pleased as I looked into the mirror. The practical braids and plain dresses I had worn heretofore had offered rather severe treatment for my plain, dark features. With much secret satisfaction I observed that the banker's six year old son, at the foot of the hill, suddenly realized that I was in existence. At school I had been furtively casting glances in his direction for some little time. Now he and I played together after school and on Saturdays, usually engaging ourselves in innocent games, but my conscience still hurts a little when I think of the time when we ran out of innocent things to do and raided the neighbor's garden -- went in and pulled up three turnips and left them lying on the ground, for no reason at all except that some little imp of Satan goaded us on. Unreasoning chickens or dogs could have done no worse. The difference exists in the fact that more than likely a fowl or mongrel would have had little remembrance or regret for the act fifty years hence.

Two other incidents that happened that winter have lain heavily on my conscience. I told two "stories." One was at school. I had an apple, half-eaten, in my desk. When Miss McLaughlin asked me if I was eating an apple, I said, "No." She did not question me further. I got away with the untruth nicely, but with diminishing intensity I have borne the weight of that half-eaten apple, if not the entire desk, throughout the years. The other "story" was told to Jessie. She had given me a string of beads to play with. When she asked me where they were, I said I didn't know. I didn't think she would be pleased to know I had dropped her pretty necklace down the neck of my dress and that it was then reposing at a place

where it was difficult to recover without removing my clothing. Jessie never knew the difference, but I had to add to my conscience the weight of those beans, to the weight of the turnips, the weight of the apple and the desk. By that time I felt my conscience was well loaded down and that I would try my best not to contribute anything more to make it heavier. I decided that if I had resisted the impulse to commit the dereliction in the first place, or if I had told the truth in the second place, the hurt, though acute at the time, would have been of short duration, instead of cause for years of distress.

It was most disconcerting. What about individual freedom? Why were human beings equipped with such a circumscribing invisible mentor? Others of the animal kingdom were not so handicapped.

Jessie was fastidious. Having only one child to look after, she required that I toe the mark in some respects not considered of such major importance in our big family but that we could "get by" on occasion without suffering undesirable consequences. At Jessie's I must adhere closely to the rules governing cleanliness and "nice manners." There must be no exception to the rule that I wash my hands with soap before I came to the table. I must go to the bother of repairing to some other room when I found it necessary to blow my nose. I must never forget my "thank you's" or "pleases" or "excuse me's."

It was fun during this winter to visit at home. I would take a few articles in a bag or a box, and spend a day or two with my family. I was glad to go home, but was glad to come back to Jessie's in spite of the rigid rules. I was an important personage in her family. At home I had to content myself with one-tenth of the time and attention given to the family as a whole.

It was a nice winter for me. No doubt it offered some relief to Mother and Father, and I hope some satisfaction to Jessie. Though two sons came to her house in later years, I was the only little girl she ever had.

It was on a Sunday while we still lived in the cottage that the greatest disaster of the county's history occurred. I was almost eleven years old, a big enough girl, Mother said, so that she felt safe to leave me to look after the two children while she went to evening church services with Father. One evening she tucked the little ones into bed, gave me a few admonitions, and left. The children ceased their babbling. The house became strangely quiet, and I felt lonely. It was silent outside. Not a leaf stirred. It had been one of those hot Iowa days which takes the "starch" out of one and leaves him with wilted and lifeless feelings. Evening gave no relief. I sat idle for a while, and mopped the ever recurring perspiration from my face, but I finally hunted up a book and was soon absorbed in its contents, oblivious to the silence and the heat and the aloneness. The evening wore on. Subconsciously, I began to feel that all was not right. I stirred apprehensively in my chair. At last it was borne in upon me that the thing that was disturbing me was an unfamiliar roar, like a freight train rumbling over a bridge, only different and continuous. I closed my book with a finger inserted to mark the place, and went out on the front porch to look around. Nothing seemed to be amiss, but the roar continued. Suddenly gusts of wind arose, but quickly died down, leaving that ominous silence. Feeling uneasy and unconvinced of the rightness of everything, I went to the porch several times, but could see nothing. I didn't want anything to happen to the younger ones this first night I had acted as a "sitter."

The folks arrived just ahead of a terrific downpour of rain which was accompanied by some hail. I was glad they hurried home before the storm broke. I spoke to them about the roar, but Father seemed indifferent and unconcerned. "It was probably just a train, or perhaps the noise of this onrushing rain," he said. I was not quite convinced, but since Father was not concerned, I felt relieved enough to go to bed and immediately to sleep.

I had not reached school the next day before I felt the unwonted excitement in the air. People with serious faces were gathered in knots along the way, talking. The children in the school yard were not playing. They were in groups talking excitedly in low tones. Then I found out. A drifter about seven miles west

of us had undergone a devastating "cyclone." Twenty people had been killed outright. Seventy had been more or less seriously injured, some fatally.

School didn't amount to much that day, and neither did business or other normal pursuits. A procession of buggies and surreys, and hacks and wagons with other nondescript vehicles loaded with passengers was soon on its way to Valeria, the nearest town, and the one where the storm had been most vicious. The "plug train" was loaded with passengers en route to the tragic scenes. All day, and for several days, immense crowds viewed the ruins and devastation. These people returned to tell dramatic and fantastic tales. "Believe it or not," this was the tragic situation at Valeria and vicinity as reported by reliable witnesses. A black ravaged area, perhaps a half mile wide in places to a few yards wide in others extended for approximately twenty-five miles. This area was bereft of grass, of trees, of buildings, with debris and dead animals scattered about on its scarred surface. The lines delineating the limits of the storm were as neatly drawn as if done deliberately by human hands. Trees in some places were entirely bereft of foliage on one side. The other was untouched, as green and fresh as early spring could make them. Wells were sucked dry of water. Some chickens were seen running about denuded of feathers, "pin feathers and all." Hogs were seen cleanly decapitated.

The storm had narrowed to a few yards in a railway cut. With terrific concentrated force it had torn up the rails and even the ties. The twisted rails and broken ties were scattered about. One thirty-two foot rail was driven vertically into the solid ground for a distance of fourteen feet. In the middle of a floor from which one house had been lifted and carried away, reposed in strange solitude an unbroken wash bowl.

The Pitcock home had been picked up, carried about fifty yards and deposited in a ditch. The newspaper report afterward said, "The members of the family were more or less injured." Sol Dickey, at the time his home was leveled, was in bed with the baby of the household. He and the babe were both blown to a brush heap some distance away. Mr. Dickey was "bruised badly." The babe was uninjured.

The Philson home was completely turned over. The occupants had just gone down stairs. They were unharmed but were compelled to go "up stairs" in order to get out of the house.

Mr. Phelan had apparently started for a storm cave close by with a child under each arm. The three were carried forty feet, dashed against a tree and all killed. Mrs. Phelan was found in a dying condition at the door of the cave. A son and a daughter of the Phelan family were blown fifty feet but were saved.

The head of one woman who was killed was so imbedded in the earth it took the strength of several persons to extricate it. The creamery was demolished and cheese was scattered broadcast. Huge trees and shrubbery were uprooted and carried some distance. A 1200 pound steer was carried a half mile and deposited in a hole in the ground.

After the disaster I was unduly terrified about storms for years, but thereafter when I heard that ominous roar, I looked for the funnel-shaped cloud in the south west. If it were not in evidence, then I knew the storm must be following a harmless course high in the sky, or else I was hearing things; since the scientists told us such storms always moved from west to east, and usually in a north easterly direction. They told us that in case we were convinced we were in the path of such a storm, if we were in a frame house, we should go to the south west corner of the basement, since frame houses were usually lifted and moved intact. The basement of a brick house, they said, was a dangerous retreat since the wind, revolving at a velocity of perhaps four or five hundred miles an hour, would, as a rule, tear such a house to pieces and the debris would be hurled into the basement.

Cave construction became a profitable business for some time following the storm. The populace lost no time in seeing to it that in case such a fierce and unforeseeable destroyer came their way again, they would be prepared. At our next house father had a "cyclone" cave constructed below the level of the ground with a strong

dome-shaped brick ceiling. The entrance was from the basement. The cave was large enough to accomodate the whole family and even some of the neighbors if they could manage to reach its comparative safe confines in time. I can't remember more than twice in fourteen years that we sought its protection, and then we were disappointed. Nothing happened. When we emerged, the house was still there.

Gradually, as time went on and no more "cyclones" appeared, people grew indifferent, so much so that I doubt if one can find many "cyclone" caves still existent in the community.

Fifty years have passed since the tragic storm tore through the county. Only once have I been near enough to be justifiably concerned at the approach of a tornado. I stood in the court house in Newton watching one enter and graze a swath through the town. It was high. I believe it never gained actual contact with the ground. Even so, I could see debris whirling in the air as the storm advanced west and north of the court house. It took the top floor from a washing machine factory, blew the north side out of a lumber yard building, lifted garage roofs and deposited them on the ground. One man was killed. After the storm we apprehensively sought Em, whose home had been in the path of the storm. Her house was injured only slightly, but we found her weeping over the destruction of seven large, sound elm trees which had been uprooted or snapped off in her lawn. She and a number of the neighbors had sought personal safety in a cave. Later we found my parents had sat reading in a house three or four blocks from the path of the storm and, amazingly, had not been the least bit conscious that a twister was in progress.

Father told me that damage resulting from such natural catastrophes in his experience is attributed to an "act of God." As I see it now, I feel that God has produced so few contrivances to kill and injure man as compared to what man himself has "injured up" that one may justifiably feel unconcerned at the possibility that he may suffer injury as the result of such an "Act."

The populace of the middle west where "cyclones", now more properly designated as "tornadoes", are prevalent, seem to hold to such a philosophy. At any rate, they live along from day to day giving no evidence of excessive fear that such a catastrophe may overtake them.

When I was ten, Isa used to come from Drake University to give lessons in "eloquence" to a class at Colfax. My father was anxious that all of us should learn to speak effectively. He asked Isa to stay at our house and to give some of us lessons for her board and room. I don't see how we wedged her in and bedded her down, but we managed it.

Father was pleased, in this connection, to find the school in our town offered an opportunity for us to continue our speech work. There were not only the Friday afternoon programs, but in the high school there were the declamatory contests, sponsored by a state organization. As we entered high school, Father strongly urged us to enter these contests. "It doesn't matter whether you win or not," he said, "You'll get a lot of valuable training."

Jess was the first in our family to compete in the contests. For weeks, above the usual turmoil of the cottage, we could hear him in the parlor practicing portions of his dramatic and moving production. We particularly liked the part that said, "Up and down! Up and down!" "Stick to her, Mike. It'll soon be over now. And away they went down that long track fifteen miles an hour."

The night of the contest was momentous. The Tripps were all there, wedged in among the other noisy enthusiasts who filled the church auditorium. We sat in quiet and strained attention as Jess again took Mike and Mike through their narrowing scenes. By the time of the contest we all practically knew the speech by heart, but when Jess gave it that night we still hid tears back for the dramatic moment when Mat "gave the hood ear a final push and fell himself into the burning debris of the bridge as it collapsed from under him." We were breathless as Jess gave the last dramatic lines, "The car slid on onto the open track, the train was flagged, and the two hundred lives were saved!"

The other contestants did very well, but the judges could not possibly fail to see the superior element in our Jess's rendition. Nevertheless, as the judge arrived on the platform to announce the decision, each of us drew a long breath and held it, supplementing it when necessary by short, quick intakes. Managing the breath-holding was quite a feat, for the judge always had to give an endless eulogy to the speakers as a whole; then he had to tell how sorry he was that only one of the class could win, and how hard it was, owing to the excellence of the various numbers, to come to a decision. Finally, as we began to feel that we probably would suffocate, "The judges are glad to report that "John Doe" has been awarded third place." The Tripps registered relief at the word "third" by taking in a new breath. The judge went deliberately on. "Mary Smith" is awarded second place." And, very deliberately, "First place has been given to ----- Jesse Tripp." For a moment it seemed that the walls of the church collapsed, then stiffened themselves again as the applause broke forth.

We talked it over at home. Father's eyes gleamed. It was indeed good that he had brought his family to town five years ago. He had, it seems, not only a home with a "view." It was becoming increasingly evident that he had selected a town with a "view."

Jess was now eligible to enter the district contest. He was sent to Professor Ott at Drake University for intensive training. Matt, accompanied by Mike, must man his hand car and proceed on his perilous last ride again and again.

Jess won at the district contest. He had to. On the day of the contest, as his train pulled out from Colfax, the last he heard was a mighty and challenging cheer from the crowd assembled. The same kind of crowd received him when he returned with his silver medal. We youngsters stood at the back of the crowd and with joy and some anxiety saw him pursued and torn to pieces as he passed through. He had to win again at the state contest. He came home with the coveted gold medal. This time General Weaver hired a carriage at the livery stable and brought him home from the depot in style.

We took the contests seriously and Colfax won, not once but many times. It became a tradition for contestants to carry home the gold and silver "bacon."

One year a public spirited gentleman who was sojourning at one of the hotels in Colfax chartered several railroad cars, and for a nominal fee all who wished might accompany the contestant and his party to the district contest. Nearly everyone in high school besides many of the citizens so wished. Noisy "Spring City" enthusiasm filled the streets of Indianola that day. I am sure the red paint must have been much in evidence when we all departed.

Stimulated and encouraged by Jess's example, several of our family competed. I have a feeling that none of us had Jess's natural talent, but after diligent and repeated efforts we received enough honors to make Father proud of us.

But Father felt he had to pay "cover charges" for all his family received at school. He realized, he said, that few good things in life came without a bill attached, be it schools or churches or governments, or families. So he fully expected to take an interest in community affairs, to give some time out of his life to keep things going in the "right direction." If he had lived in the middle of the century instead of at the first, he would probably have said, "At times I have to stick my neck out, whether I want to or not."

As to schools, in particular, people of that time were like Father. They felt keenly that they owned the schools, and as owners they proposed to assist in establishing its policies. Because there were many people, there were many opinions, and there were many times when an issue had to be fought out. Father usually found himself in the thick of the fight.

When the time came that it was impossible to crowd all the children into the old school building on the hill, it became apparent that a new building must be constructed to collect and house the increasing school population. The school board decided to abandon the site on the hill, to buy land and to build below, on level ground. By this decision they inadvertently stirred up a nest of something worse than hornets. One section of the populace rose up in angry protest. To them, having the school house on the hill had become a tradition too precious to be tampered with. These people did not hesitate to voice their vehement convictions. "We went to school on that hill. It is certainly good enough for our children." "It has always been there," "Why do these robbers plan to waste the tax payers' good money to buy other land when we already own the land on the hill?" "By George! We want the school house to be the first object one sees as he enters the town!" "What could be more appropriate than to have the educational system occupying a commanding position on the hill overlooking the rest of the city?"

On the other hand, the exponents of the new plan heatedly suggested that the hill site had never been appropriate for a school, anyway, that it had probably been selected in the beginning because the land was cheap and unfit for dwelling lots, since horses could with difficulty negotiate the steep grade.

The fight waged hot and furious. Knots of belligerent individuals collected on the street corners. There was much shaking of fists and blazing of eyes, if not actual fist fights. In the end the low-landers won out. A fine new brick school building was erected on the flats. The old landmark on the hill was razed in good time. The furore subsided. Neighbors lived in peace and friendliness again, and school kept as usual. Everyone likes the school building where it is now. Anyone would have a considerable amount of temerity to suggest that a school house be constructed on the hill. The years have served to develop new traditions and the doctrine of laissez faire operates in its new rut.

But being on the school board is a thankless task. A few years after the school site episode, the even tenor of the city was violently disturbed again. This time the upheaval came as the result of a decision of the school board to dispense with the services of a beloved superintendent, rather than to increase his salary to the amount he stipulated. The youngsters themselves rose up in righteous indignation over this "mercenary" decision, but the board was adamant and "Professor" Kelley left. I regret to say that there was a concerted and successful attempt the next year to make life miserable for the new school officials and teachers. Insubordination was rampant. Effects of this endured for several years, but still, again, school kept. Teachers came and went, classes graduated, and children became "educated." Though of vital concern at the time, in perspective these altercations appear now to have been merely casual and inevitable agitations in a small section of a country where democracy was struggling to establish and maintain itself.

It must have been uphill business for father during these first years in town. He worked and studied incessantly, morning, noon and night. He built and established his home. He somehow kept us fed and clothed during the allotted years of study. Then he went to Des Moines and passed the bar examination. I was only twelve years old at the time, but I well remember his exuberance when he came home and made the announcement that at long last he was an attorney. He went to the cupboard and stowed away two pencils. "These are the pencils with which I wrote my tests," he said, "I want to keep them always." Now father could try law suits by himself in the district court.

At the time, we took Father and his accomplishments pretty much for granted, but the time came, later we were grown, when we were proud of what he had done. I never heard my father try a law suit, but at this later date I stood a little straighter and taller when one of the judges told us Father was one of the strongest men before a jury in his circuit. Some of his rivals who had at first dubbed him "Pumpkin Rollier" and the "illiterate lawyer" were forced in time to acknowledge his ability. His was an accomplishment typically American.

But the excessive strain took its toll. What with his studying and law practice, his insurance business, his grading and cementing and building, and providing for the needs of his large family, even before his admission to the bar, Father found himself excessively nervous and exhausted. He was advised that a vacation was essential. He decided to go to the World's Fair in Chicago. He couldn't go without Mother. He never could. He also took Jess, now seventeen and the "apple of his eye." Provision for caring for the large family was a slight problem. Baby sitters were unknown at that time. Besides, I can't imagine a sitter in his right mind taking on an assignment involving six young obstreperous clients. But Em came over from Newton, bringing her young baby. She was scarcely more than a child herself, but besides caring for her own baby, she had to look after the physical, moral and spiritual needs of six other children ranging in age from a girl three years old to a boy fifteen, Clarence, our invalid boy. At the time no one seemed to consider that Em's taking charge was an especially unusual feat to accomplish, least of all Em. She managed.

I shall never forget the night the folks came home. We all sat up until midnight listening with wide eyes to their recital of the marvels they had seen. Best of all, Father looked calm and rested again.

Sorrow came to us while we lived in the cottage. We lost Clarence. He had a rheumatic heart. We children had become accustomed to his cries of pain. One night Dr. Holland said the end was near. It was a hard task for Father, but he thought he should tell Clarence.

"Clarence," he said, "do you think you are going to get well?"

"Why, yes," Clarence said, "don't you?"

Father took his hand. "No, Clarence," he said, "Doctor Holland says you are not."

Clarence clung to Father's hand. "Then I want another doctor, Pa," he said.

By this time the tears were streaming down Father's face. "Oh, Clarence," he said, "it isn't so bad to die."

"I think it's bad," said the pain-racked boy. "Please, Pa, please get another doctor."

But before morning, as Father and Mother kept vigil and as the rest of us slept, the house became silent. We never heard his cries again.

After the funeral, Father said, "Now we must do what we should have done long ago." He arranged at the photograph gallery for a family group. Without Clarence the picture never seemed complete. Em looked at it and wept. "Why didn't we have it before?" she said.

CHAPTER VII

A Bigger and Better Home

About the time I entered eighth grade, Father became aware of the inadequacies and shortcomings of our cottage home. He had observed other homes that could boast of more conveniences and more adequate living space, homes of a type he could well see would better provide for the members of a family which now seemed to be fairly bursting the walls of the cottage with its adolescent activities. Father had to conclude that it would work out to the advantage of all to put us in two "layers," so plans were made for building a two-story house.

Again there was the upheaval in the family incident to house planning and scale drawing, grading, excavating, building and moving.

As usual, Father rushed the procedure. As soon as the bedrooms were completed, we moved in. The rooms down stairs were still uninhabitable, but it was interesting to cook and eat in the basement, while first floor rooms were being completed. Residing thus was almost as much fun for us as living in the barn had been.

This time, after the grand upheaval, we found ourselves ensconced in a commodious twelve-room house with conveniences such as we had never considered possible. High on the list was a fully equipped bathroom. How happy we were when Father announced he was not planning to build any small "out house," that the essential equipment was to be installed in the bath room. "By merely pulling a chain," he said, "Water will flow down from a high tank above the seat and effectively wash the contents of the "stool" down the drain." Our new school building which we moved into that fall was similarly equipped. How the world was pampering us! No bundling up in winter any more to face the weather, no coming in chilled with teeth chattering from the cold, or wet to the skin because of inadequate protection in stormy weather, no battling with swarms of flies in summer, no headaches resulting from waiting for an opportunity to make our way surreptitiously to the "out house" unobserved by men and boys. Now we could just go up stairs to the warm bath room. We could go boldly and unembarrassed, for now no one would ever know that we were not merely going in to wash our hands, especially if we drowned the sound of the flushed toilet by turning on the water in the wash bowl and by singing loudly, when occasion particularly demanded it.

But we missed the passing of our favorite reading room. The Sears Roebuck catalogue was no more in evidence to invite perusal. As a substitute, there was a prosaic roll of tissue paper attached to the wall, not worthy of a second look. It seems there is no great gain without some loss. In this case there was more comfort and convenience at the expense of less opportunity for leisurely reading.

We had a clever gadget on the wall in the library. It was a box like affair about three feet long vertically and perhaps eight inches square. Father told us it was a telephone. That meant little to us until after he demonstrated its use. He walked up to it, turned a small crank attached to the right side, which rang a bell. He took a cylindrical shaped article from a hook on the other side of the box and held one end to his ear. Then Father spoke into a funnel shaped contrivance on the front of the box. He first gave a number in stentorian tones, waited a few seconds and then began bellowing into the tunnel, "Hello!" he said. "Hello, I just got my telephone in." We children all lined up around him, and watched him in awe which was half fear.

Father lifted the little ones up and let them listen and talk. When it came my turn, I heard General Weaver's voice saying "Hello, Grace, how do you like your new telephone?" Too astounded for words, I quickly thrust the receiver back to Father without saying a word, and backed away. Father laughed. "But," I thought, "where was General Weaver?"

Father explained to us that Mr. Weaver was really down at the office, that by means of wires strung on poles along the street and the use of a telephone, one could talk to anyone else who had a similar gadget. He told us a company had just secured a "franchise" and was installing telephones all over town. "Now," he continued, "I can talk to anybody in Newton who has a telephone." "In fact," he said, importantly, "if I should find it necessary, I could talk to New York." Our eyes were popping out by this time.

"As soon as other telephones are in," Father said, "you children can call up anyone you wish and talk to them." "Only," he said sharply, "don't call up people in other towns. The company charges a fee for that."

We were so excited! It wasn't long until a considerable number of our friends had telephones. The Stouffers had one installed and I could talk to Vera though she lived up Sid Williams hill a whole mile away from our home. Until the new were off, Mother always knew where to find us children and she needed us. We would usually be lined up awaiting our turn at the telephone. It was fortunate

We didn't have a party line. The party of the second part and maybe the parties of the third and fourth parts would have been out of luck if they ever expected the line to be free for their calls.

We soon learned that one did not need to yell into the telephone in order to be heard, but Father did not learn that lesson for some time. He always used his hog-calling voice. When we heard him talking, we would giggle slyly among ourselves. "Pa doesn't need a telephone," we would say, "all he would have to do would be to step out on the porch and shout."

I asked Father why one could talk over a telephone. "Oh, I don't know," he said, "I suppose the sound waves travel over the wires." That explanation satisfied me until I began to study sound in high school and discovered that sound waves travelled only about 1100 feet per second in air. It didn't seem reasonable that they would travel at a faster rate through steel. I figured that, if over a telephone, sound waves did traverse the wires, it would take about five seconds for my voice to reach Vera's ears at her house, and five seconds for her answer to reach my ears. I knew we didn't have any such intervals of waiting. I was now much puzzled about the telephone and brought my problem to Professor Misner, our physics teacher. His eyes twinkled.

"Wait a few weeks, Grace" he said. When the time came, I learned it wasn't sound waves that travelled over the wires, but an electric current. I was initiated into a knowledge of the fascinating behavior of the electro magnet and learned how it functioned to make and break the current of electricity, to make possible the telegraph, the telephone, the electric bell. I was enthralled and added several statues to my personal hall of fame, Oersted's, Morse's and Alexander Graham Bell's.

In the new house we had electric lights, hot and cold water, a full basement and, unfortunately, open porches around three sides of the house. I say "unfortunately," for in spite of their elegant appearance, we never seemed to find enough uses for these open porches to pay for the weekly scrubbings they required. However, such porches were popular in that day, so we had to have them. At least they gave Father a vantage point from which to exhibit his "view."

In the new house we had at least two rooms that were rarely used, a parlor and a reception room. Other people were building according to this plan, so we must too, although the large living room, library, dining room and kitchen seemed to give us plenty of living space for ordinary occasions.

There were finer homes in town than ours, but none viewed with greater pride. Father had engaged Charley Byers to do the greater part of the building. Byers was expert in carpentry work. He prided himself in the fact that before he had given one nail the last tap, he had another one ready to pound in. That type of industry appealed to Father. Much of the finishing and some of the varnishing Father did himself by using every extra moment that he could squeeze out evenings and holidays, when he didn't have to be at the office. He and the boys did all the plumbing. The plumbing system, though crudely constructed in places, worked efficiently and seemed ultra plus to us. Father was very proud of a device he figured out for the bath room, which provided hot water immediately without the necessity of waiting for it to come from the basement. This was accomplished by the simple expedient of installing an extra pipe so arranged that the hot water circulated through it at all times. I can see Father yet, when to certain guests he would say, "Come on up stairs. I want to show you something."

Father was proud of the fact that in the new house we had central heating. The furnace was of a type which probably cannot be found today. It was about eight or ten feet long horizontally, and perhaps two feet square. It was designed to accommodate and consume logs which for our furnace were piled on our farm and hauled twelve miles to town. One of the tedious Saturday duties of the older boys in the winter time was to go and fetch loads of these logs to town in quantities sufficient to heat our large house. This job was not one that was particularly sought after in our family. Mechanical trucks were, of course, unknown at this time. The

hauling must be done with a team of horses and the wagon. At times when the thermometer registered fifteen to twenty-five degrees below zero, one could scarcely be expected to anticipate with any great amount of pleasure, a six hour drive to and from the country, supplemented by the rather chilly, strenuous, job of loading and unloading a cord or so of long logs. But the fires must go on.

In those days we learned to appreciate the cost in labor of keeping the house even fairly comfortable. Every effort was made to conserve fuel. In winter time the parlor and reception room were closed off from the rest of the house, registers closed. The bed rooms were left unheated. At night we absorbed as much heat as we could before making a wild dash for our beds, and we wasted little time in the morning in dressing and racing for the bath room or living room.

Father soon realized that the furnace was inadequate for the job it was supposed to do. I don't remember that we complained, but Father wanted things right. He set himself the task of figuring out a way to produce a more adequate supply of heat. In trying to solve this problem, Father's practical scientific knowledge failed him. There were principles about heat which unfortunately he did not know, and which caused his elaborate and costly schemes for an improved heating system to come to naught.

Father had observed that some of the homes in town were heated by hot water radiators, so he finally conceived the idea of lining his furnace with water pipes and installing radiators in the rooms up stairs. He reasoned that when this was all accomplished, he would have a combination hot air and hot water system which would probably produce twice as much heat from a given amount of fuel as he had with hot air ducts alone.

I shall never forget the excitement in the air the day all was in readiness and the fire was built in the remodelled furnace. When the fire was sufficiently active, Father went up stairs and felt of the radiators. They were throwing out a considerable amount of heat. His face glowed with the thrill of creative accomplishment. Then he inspected the hot air registers and his face fell.

"Well, I don't understand that," he said. "There is scarcely any heat coming from the registers." He reasoned that it was possible that sufficient time had not elapsed to heat the iron jacket that would radiate the heat out into the hot air pipes. He kept the fire booming all day, but the situation was little changed. The hot air registers had become practically useless adjuncts. The radiators were stealing all the heat. Thus in the hard way, the trial and error method, Father learned the simple scientific fact that each pound of fuel contains just so many units of heat, that if these units are absorbed by water, they cannot be thrown off into the air.

One article constructed in the big house which Father was wont to display to his guests with much pride was the oak stairway, of ginger bread variety, leading from the reception hall. I think Mr. Byers, wishing to use his new lathe, talked Father into this luxurious installation. Later I spent hours dusting the curly spindles and stuffing my dust cloth into the almost inaccessible crevices. As this process was repeated week after week, and year after year, I decided in my own mind that the stairway was scarcely useful nor beautiful enough to warrant the "cover charge" that had to be paid for it. As I performed the incessant dusting, I placed the stairway, in my mind, in the same category as the large open porches, the extra parlor and a large hallway up stairs which didn't seem to serve any useful purpose. The stairway was rarely used except when we wanted to get married and, "to the strains of Mendelsohn's wedding march, descend the stairs on the arm of our father." This ceremony occurred only once in fourteen years, when Leo was married, and when, through much persuasive effort, we succeeded in persuading Father to rise to the occasion and furnish the traditional fatherly arm.

One dusting of all the curly-kews required about fifteen minutes. It was thoroughly performed at least once a week or fifty-two times a year. In fourteen years that would amount to 182 hours, a goodly amount of time consumed, I thought, in preparing the stairway for one wedding procession. For ordinary purposes we could have, and did, use the back stairway. It was sufficient to bear the weight of

traffic even in our large family. But other people of that day were installing two stairways, so I doubt if it was difficult to persuade Father that we too should enjoy that luxury.

After providing for the unnecessary adjuncts in our new home, there was too little room left for bed rooms. We had only four. As we still had ten people in the family besides numerous guests to provide for, anyone good in arithmetic can see that meant that some of the bedrooms had to accommodate three or four people. This condition was typical of the homes of the nineties. Above all else, one must provide commodious living rooms. Bed rooms and closets were of secondary importance. However, I must admit that as we grew older and each gathered about himself his own little, or big, coterie of friends, it was rather advantageous to have a number of different rooms to which we could retreat for privacy. Besides, it was worth something that our living rooms were commodious enough so that our home became a favorite place for holding church sociables and large school parties. On these occasions our whole house was transformed into a rumpus room. Broken chairs and sofas were later repaired with little complaint or censure from Father or Mother.

I realize now that the neighbors were long suffering and most tolerant. I don't believe we did much that was really malicious, but our noise and confusion must have been a constant element in disturbing the peace. They must have felt like Docia who visited in the home across the street. Several years later, after she had been married to my brother Jess, she admitted that she had thought a gang of "hoodlums" must live in the big square house across the street. She said that people were constantly coming and going, doors would slam, boys would yell at one another, people would be practicing on the piano at all hours of the day. She said she used to sit in the window and watch, wondering what was going to happen next in the house of chaos.

But through it all, according to Mother, we "grew in stature," and I hope in wisdom and in favor with God and man.

CHAPTER VIII

A Bad Jolt

Father was pleased with his new house for many years. He had, at last, a satisfactory home in which to rear his family. We lived comfortably and more "luxuriously" than ever.

When we first moved into the house, we youngsters were strung through the grades from third to twelfth. Gradually we moved from grade to grade and each in turn found himself the center of the family stage, in the graduating class. Father said, "All too quickly."

When the boys finished school, they had the task of deciding what they should do. Should they try to go to college, as a very few of their class mates were doing, or should they get a job as the majority of them were doing? When I graduated, there was little question. It did not occur to me or to anyone else at that time that it would be possible for me to go to college, and my father's philosophy precluded the idea of work.

Father did not want his girls to work outside the home. Girls were supposed to find a helpmate, establish a home, fill it with children, and prepare to "live happily ever after" as he and Mother had done. Awaiting that desirable romantic occurrence, girls had "plenty to do to help their mothers." My parents could, at the time, see no compensation in a girl substituting a career for the "natural life." That was pretty much the general parent attitude at the time. Still, there were some indications of a change. Some of my friends were beginning to go out to clerk in stores and to work in offices, hoping, perhaps in privacy, that the work would need be only temporary.

Father was willing to settle with us, if we insisted, for a teaching job, long acknowledged as a suitable and respectable vocation for a girl. Against his better judgment he might consent to our working in a store if he knew and trusted the proprietor, but to work in a man's office, "Never!" No man could be trusted to associate daily in an office with a pretty girl, or maybe even an ugly one. Anyhow, the risks were too great to take. So I stayed at home and began filling my "hope chest."

It was well I stayed, for a year later we experienced our biggest family jolt, and I was badly needed. It had never occurred to us that the time would come when Mother would not be at the helm to see that the household kept going on the right track. But it did. One Monday morning Mother went to the basement to start the family washing. She was back up stairs shortly and sat down in the kitchen. "I don't know what to do," she said, in a voice that sounded close to tears. "Milo put the water to heat in the boiler, but he put on hard water and I don't have any lye to break it with."

I looked up from my dish washing in some concern. For Mother to sit down in the midst of the morning's work was most unusual. For her to be close to tears was disturbing. For her not to know what to do was even alarming. But still she sat.

"I'll get you some lye," I said. "I can probably borrow some from Mrs. Kimmel." But when Mother got the lye, she still sat. I glanced up from time to time with anxiety.

Finally I said, "Don't you feel well, Ma?" "No, I don't," she said, and flicked off the tears which sprang to her eyes. That did disturb me.

"Well," I said, "I'll do the washing. You go up and go to bed." I couldn't believe my senses when I saw her start up the stairs unprotesting.

Washing was one thing she didn't think anyone else could do but herself. My suggestions in the past that I should do it had always resulted in my having a greater and greater respect for the techniques of washing, and a deepening sense of inferiority as to the possibility of my ever being able to master the art. I was led to believe that there were a number of steps which required expert attention. First, the clothes must be thoroughly collected from here and there about the house. I would probably miss some. Then they must be carefully sorted according to importance and color. No one but an expert of long standing could do that in such a way that white clothes, in washing, should stay white, and colored ones should retain their color and come out clear and bright.

One must use the right amount of water, temper it accurately, put just the right number of clothes in each tubfull, be sure to use the right kind of soap and generate plenty of suds, keep the washing machine running just so many minutes, which time differed with the various tabsfull. One must select the proper clothes for boiling. When taking the clothes from the boiler, one must know how to wrap them around the end of the wash stick so that they could be lifted high enough for the excess water to drain back into the boiler. Then there was the careful rinsing and the bluing. Too little bluing caused the clothes to get yellow. Too much was bad, too, especially for the linens. There was the making of the starch so it wouldn't stick when the clothes were ironed, and the thinning it to proper consistency for each of the various garments.

Mother didn't even like to have us hang the clothes on the line. We found that needed expert attention too, since each article had its assigned place on the line, and that place varied from day to day with the wind and sun. White clothes must be hung in a sunny place to bleach, colored ones in the shade to retain color. Garments must be hung so that the wind could gain access to their interiors and plump them out. Rags and worn clothing must be hung in a place that did not show plainly from the street or neighbor's homes so that people would not know we had such disreputable articles.

It is small wonder that a mere inexperienced seventeen year old should have felt apprehensive as she descended to the basement that November morning. Things did not go well. By the time I had to begin preparations for dinner, the washing was scarcely started. I had had to make several trips up the two flights of steps to confer with Mother. I was disturbed that she did not appear much interested or concerned as to what was happening to the washing.

When Father came home at noon, he sent for Dr. Holland in haste. The family was much upset. Even the young ones ate sparingly in awed silence.

Mother did not get better. A sort of spasm that noon initiated a long illness. She never recovered sufficiently to take her place at the head of the house, as before. We felt lost and insecure. It took some time for the family to settle down to a new routine in which Leo and I assumed Mother's former duties, and she became a semi-invalid, of whom we must be very considerate. It was a shock, but I am getting ahead of my story, as it did not occur until we had lived in the new house for several years.

CHAPTER IX

The Battle of the Floors

Though Mother was still definitely "chief cook and bottle washer" when we first found ourselves settled in the big house, we must all bend to the burden of keeping it clean and beautiful, and we must learn to adapt ourselves to its new spaciousness, its new gadgets and conveniences. My father always managed to acquire newer and better things as they appeared on the market, if he became convinced that they would make the home pleasanter for us and the work "easier for Ma."

I realize now, as I did not then, that when we had come from the farm and were deposited on the door step of the Austin House, our furnishings and equipment were quite meager. We had just about enough to get along with, and no more.

The first floor coverings I remember were "rag" carpets. Certain women in the various neighborhoods had looms, and for a price would weave carpets for the people in the vicinity. One of the never ending tasks of the women in each household was to cut up all the old clothes in to half-inch strips, sew these strips together securely end to end, and wind the continuous strip of rags into a round, hard ball. Usually, when completed, the ball was about six inches in diameter and weighed about a pound. When a sufficient number of these balls had collected about the house, they were carried off to the weaver, who wove them into yard wide strips of carpet. Sometimes the carpets were woven "hit and miss." At other times the finished product was striped in fancy colors by using different colors of cloth. Sometimes a shadowy striped or squared effect was produced by using different colors of warp.

As I remember it, our carpets were usually the "hit and miss" type. We needed such yards and yards of it, and Mother was far too frugal to pay the extra money for the fancy weaving.

I didn't like rag carpets, and still don't care for the "rag" rugs which some people consider so lovely for scatter rugs. I suppose at that time, rather than sew these everlasting carpet rags, I would have preferred the bare floors, even though they were usually made of six to ten inch unfinished soft pine boards which shrank after a few years, leaving wide, unsightly cracks, an excellent place for dust and dirt to collect. Mother didn't agree with me as to the bare floors and so we always had on hand our basket of rags in various stages of preparedness for the weaver. When I was about eight or ten, Mother conceived the brilliant idea that it wasn't conducive to the best development of children to run and play all the time, and in the process of exploring her mind to discover suitable worth while occupations, she struck upon the idea of carpet rag sewing. Every day, for some time, I was called in from a perfectly fascinating game of blind man's buff or hide and seek, to perform the grueling task of sewing and winding a pound ball of carpet rags. As I sewed I could hear the other youngsters at their game outside, and I pit my mother down as a cruel and inhuman taskmaster.

These carpets, like many today, covered the floor from wall to wall. In order to make them resilient, they were underlaid with straw. They must be tight on the floor, so we had a gadget we called a carpet stretcher, consisting of a piece of metal upon which were attached sharp metal projections. This in turn was attached to a sort of lever which drew the carpet up to the wall snugly in position for the tacks to be driven in. Twice a year it became necessary to disattach the carpet and take it out on the lawn where it underwent a thorough beating with a beater constructed much like a huge wire egg beater and a little larger than a tennis racquet. The dust laden straw was removed from the floor and burned. After the other routine duties of the housecleaning were carried out, fresh clean straw was laid down to receive the fresh clean carpet. The carpet stretcher was brought into play, and after a great deal of to-do the room was ready for another six months' run. The carpet was soft and puffy when first laid down and the smaller children thought it great fun to lie down and roll on it. As we grew older and had to participate in the job of cleaning the fun of carpet rolling could scarcely compensate for the upheaval of house cleaning. Multiply this process as described for one room, by ten or so, and you will gain some idea of the night mare house cleaning came to be in the old days.

The semi-annual house cleaning was an event to be anticipated with dread, but the weekly cleaning was a house stirring event as well. To prepare for the sweeping ordeal, outdoor windows were thrown open, furniture was dusted and all removed to another room or to the porch. If Mother had left it to us, the dusting process would have been done with dispatch. We would have purchased a feather duster and flicked the dust all off in a jiffy, but Mother had an unreasoning prejudice against feather dusters and would not permit one in the house. Even so, we could have done the dusting almost as expeditiously with a cloth, but Mother was a born obstructionist when it came to our carrying out efficient methods in house cleaning. She would say, "Girls, when you dust, don't act as if you were afraid of hurting the furniture. Rub it hard. Rub the spindles with a twisting movement until the cloth squeaks."

Sweeping was done with a broom. If we were wise, before beginning, we covered our heads with a dust cap. Sometimes pieces of wet paper or snow were strewn over the carpet to keep the dust down. At times, for dust control, the broom was dipped in a pail of water. We were taught to sweep with long strokes, keeping the bristles on the floor and not flipping the broom upward at the end of the strokes to raise a cloud of dust. But in spite of all our precautions, the air was thick with dust when the task was finally completed. We had to permit "the dust to settle" before the furniture was returned and re-arranged.

The purchase of our first Bissel's carpet sweeper was a most welcome event. It picked up the loose debris and surface dirt without at the same time beclouding the air with dust, but, like the broom, it left most of the dust in the carpet. A hand power vacuum cleaner was our next acquisition, but that proved a little difficult for woman power to manipulate. We didn't use it much. I don't know who is given credit for inventing the modern vacuum cleaner, but see no reason why his name should not be immortalized along with James Watt, Alexander Graham Bell, Marconi, et al. We never had this modern life saver.

At first the carpets, even in the new home, were "rag." By the time these wore out Mother was becoming "citified." She had neglected to provide herself with rags sewn and ready for the next carpet. I have a faint suspicion that the omission was deliberate. Mother had seen factory made carpets in other homes and she wanted one. One day we arrived home and there was a huge roll of "ingrain" carpet. This carpet was a fabric weave, much like what was to be sold later as heavy upholstery.

Mother unrolled a portion of the carpet and we stood around with eyes gleaming with admiration. It was pretty. It had a soft red background with a leafy design in light tan. The neighbors were as pleased as we. Mrs. Kimmel and Mrs. Marquis offered to come over to help Mother cut the carpet into strips and sew it together. In a few days I heard Mother say, "Dick, will you and Milo come home early tonight? I want to lay the new carpet." We all came home early, stood around in the way and watched the stretching and tacking process wide-eyed with interest. It was beautiful on the floor, but all the fun we had always had rolling on clean, soft carpet was now apparently a thing of the past. Mother had been so extravagant and so inconsiderate of us as to buy strips of soft thick paper as a sub-strata for this carpet instead of using straw. A few

trials were sufficient to convince us that the comparatively hard, unyielding surface furnished a very unsatisfactory and disappointing rolling place.

The new carpet was lovelier than the old rag carpet, but it did not relieve us of any of the cleaning, stretching and tacking down problems. It was short lived. It couldn't stand the weight of traffic at our house. Next came our body Brussels carpet, a pile carpet but distinguished from Brussels such as we have today by the fact that the pile was in loops and left uncut. In our eyes it was extra special. It was green with pink flower clusters.

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Our home was becoming lovelier in our eyes, and fortunately so, as by this time most of us were in high school and at the age where deficiencies in our home became more apparent and of greater importance. This carpet graced the parlor and "reception" room for several years. It was our practice to adorn these front rooms with the best we had. These rooms acted as our best foot as it were, which must always be put forward. Important guests were ushered in at the seldom used front door of the reception room, and were supposed to be so impressed with the fine things they saw there that they would not be inclined to observe the other rooms which sometimes, because of much use, developed a somewhat run down at the heel appearance.

Father brought his special guests in at the front door for another reason. It gave him such an excellent opportunity, just as he got to the door, to turn casually and say proudly, "What do you think of our view?"

As the furnishings of these much used, but less important rooms became worn, it was our custom to practice a hand-me-down process in much the same way as clothes were handed down from older to younger members of the family.

By the time the green brussels was required for other rooms, Father had come to realize the advantages of hard wood varnished floors. He determined to have them. He first tackled the library. He announced one day that he had ordered the lumber and planned to lay that floor himself in a couple of hours that evening. His estimation of the time it would require was slightly in error. He worked every evening for a week before the last board was in place. He promptly engaged a carpenter to lay the floors in the two front rooms. Father's inability to judge with any degree of accuracy of the time it would take to do a certain piece of work became a standing joke in our family. If any of us seemed to exaggerate his ability to perform a task within a certain time, the others would say, "Hello, Pa." or, sarcastically, "Yes, I imagine you could lay a floor in two hours."

When the floors were laid and varnished, Mother and Father purchased rugs, red Wiltons, both resembling patterns in Orientals. About this time one of those charming Irish ladies appeared on the scene with her bag of laces and tricks. We were amazed to see Mother purchasing five panels of lace for the front windows, costing five dollars a piece, in our eyes an immense sum for mere window curtains.

We wished we had been at home to observe Miss O'Brien's purse-opening technique. We might have been able to practice up and use it to advantage ourselves. Long afterwards we discovered, from our own personal encounters, that the trick was probably turned by way of the Blarney Stone. We were delighted that the O'Brien woman had kissed that famous stone and had received the power that emanates from it, for when the curtains were hung and the new rugs laid, we were sure that in the accoutrements of our "best foot" we were approaching the grandeur of the four hundred.

By the time we made the transformation in the appearance of the front rooms, a daughter of General Weaver's who labored with us in the effort to teach us music, had persuaded Father to trade the reed organ in on a shining new piano. It felt right at home in the midst of our new finery.

The new rugs in the parlor not only appealed to our aesthetic natures, but to the practical as well. The rugs never got so impregnated with dust as the old carpets. They could be whisked out of doors most any night after school, some

of the boys could wield the beater and the rugs could be laid in a jiffy all clean and fresh -- no irritation, no fuss, no clouds of dust, no general upheaval. What relief and what luxury.

The kitchen floor in the big house presented a real problem. It was of hard pine and, at first, it was left unfinished. Young hands were none too careful with regard to the slopping of dish water and the dropping of particles of food. This necessitated many scrubbings--not moppings, but genuine scrubbings. Gold dust, a preparation which "chased the dirt", was sprinkled over the floor and the scrubbing vigorously accomplished by the assigned scrubber with a broom dipped in hot water. The suds was afterwards rinsed off the floor, and the excess water was mopped up. Not a small, insignificant puddle could be left. We had to go over the floor criss cross and catty corner, continuing long after all pools of water had disappeared, so far as we could see. Somehow, Mother had a faculty for finding pools where there were none. When the floor was finished to Mother's satisfaction, we must then take clean water and a clean cloth and wipe off all the mop boards, even behind the doors and behind the tables and stoves where we fruitlessly tried to convince Mother no one would ever see the dirt. If we objected to our scrubbing job, she told us we were fortunate that she didn't require us to scrub up with a brush, on our hands and knees. "That is the way it should really be done," she asserted.

People in those days were most particular about the appearance of their floors. They felt that a woman was judged by the whiteness of her kitchen floors. The scrubbing process described did leave them white and spotless, but most receptive of dirt and grease that was dropped thereon, or of mud and wet tracked in from outside.

Keeping the floors white was a most discouraging task in a large family. Father observed this fact and finally tried the experiment of oiling the floors as was done in school houses and other public buildings of the day. The dirt did not sink into the boards then and moppings usually sufficed to clean the floors, but Mother never liked it so. The pretty white floor was darkened and ugly according to her ideas.

Back saving waxed linoleum never arrived in time for us to install it in the big house.

For many of the modern house keeping conveniences we were "born thirty years too soon." We did not know this. We were so pleased with improvements as they came along that we had the mistaken notion that we were extremely fortunate. We thought, for instance, at the time that we had pretty much gained the victory in the Battle of the Floors.

CHAPTER X

A Series of Battles

Our walls in the big house had been finished with a top coat of smooth white plaster. When they were new and clean we used them as they were. I have a feeling that the general effect of the plain, white walls was better than when paper was applied later, at least according to present aesthetic standards. As I remember the paper in the various rooms, it was usually rather gaudy with large figures and over-bright colors. But it was just the type others were using in that Mid-Victorian period, and we thought the huge sprays of roses and the large conventional designs quite effective as compared with the plain appearance of the pre-papering days.

As we grew a little older, we girls began to have ideas of our own as to the type of paper we should like to have. At one time Leo and I conceived the idea that the dining room needed paper. We much desired a certain type. However, we didn't seem to be able to make Father and Mother paper conscious. Their enthusiasm regarding the project remained decidedly lukewarm. But our chance came. At that period two of my brothers were on the farm and Father and Mother often spent a week or two at a time there, supervising the boys' clumsy efforts, leaving us girls, with Elleanor to keep an eye on us, as official housekeepers in town.

During one of these parental sojourns, Leo and I, in a reckless mood, decided to carry out our papering scheme. We felt ourselves most important, though inwardly shaking in our boots, as we sallied forth to select the paper and engage the paper hanger.

As the paper was applied and the room blossomed forth in its lovely new coat, we decided the result was well worth everything it would cost us, that whatever happened to us, nothing could take from us the joy we were sure we would experience from gazing up the lovely unauthorized fruits of our labors. The design of the paper was of soft green vines winding upward to a drop ceiling of plate rail level.

The arrival of the parents was a let down. We had nerv'd ourselves to receive the impact of whatever came, but nothing happened. I doubt if Father even observed the transformation. We didn't bother to call his attention to it. He must have approved the bill which arrived later. Anyhow, we never heard from that quarter. As to Mother, I think in her heart she was as much impressed with the glorified appearance of the room as we were. She may have felt that after all, it was just one more job completed which she didn't have to think about. At any rate, she accepted it with no derogatory remarks and even after a time spoke with some favor of the improved appearance of the room.

We were sometimes amazed, as in this case, at what we "got by" with, but we didn't tempt fate by attempting such maneuvers very often.

Adequate furniture was a gradual acquisition in our family. I believe that we brought three rocking chairs from the farm, mostly home made, and home-caned by Great Uncle Billy.

Our beds were of walnut, but mostly of the nondescript variety. I think they must have been originally inherited from relatives or friends.

Mattresses at first were home made, of heavy unbleached muslin ticks filled with straw, which had to be emptied out and renewed at intervals. The little princess who could detect even a small pea beneath her mattress could never have slept a night on such a mattress. It would have been irritating to her royal skin, but being Iowa children, not far removed from pioneer days, our skins were tough. We fell asleep with total disregard for the pricks of up-ending straws. I cannot say though that we did much grieving when these mattresses were replace with commercials.

At the time of the renovation of the front rooms, fumed oak, mission style, was popular, so these rooms and the dining room were furnished with that sturdy type of furniture. This all helped to accomplish the splendid effect we felt we had attained. If our home had run true to form, our fumed oak would have been preceded by golden oak. In my time furniture popularity has run the gamut from walnut and mahogany, to golden oak, to fumed oak, back to walnut and mahogany, and finally to Swedish or other modern.

The cook stove we brought from the farm was a cast iron, woodburning affair with a hearth. The oven was low at one side. My chief objection to this stove had been that it made us in unending amount of work. The fine white wood ashes, as they were daily poked down from the space below the fire box, and shoveled into a bucket, would fly in the air and settle over floors and furniture. A second objection to the stove, scarcely less annoying, was that the wood burned out very quickly and had to be constantly replenished. A third objection, almost on a par with the other two, was the fact that the surface of the stove had to be polished. We had to wait for an occasion when the fire was out and the stove cool, to apply the polish and then we had to rub it vigorously down to a fine black sheen. If the boys were writing these memoirs, they would add a fourth objection to the stove, the fact that they were required daily to saw and split countless arm loads of wood, carry them into the house and deposit them in the wood box beside the stove.

The stove in the big house was a big improvement over the old one. Father had said, "I'm going to get a stove for you, Ma, that will almost run itself."

"And you should see what will be attached to it," he said mysteriously.

The new stove was a beautiful steel range, equipped for burning coal instead of wood. When the stove was filled, the fire would keep several hours without our replenishing the fuel. We got rid of the task of eternally stuffing the ravenous fire. The boys with joy discovered that the chore of splitting and carrying wood was over. "Who cares about scooping up and bringing in a couple of hods of coal," they said.

The surprise attachment was a tank behind the stove which provided us for the first time with running hot water. We reveled in this, but not extravagantly, for we had to be saving of our water. For drinking and cooking purposes we had city water which was plentiful. Unfortunately, Iowa is in the hard water belt. I have no scientific proof for my statement, but from my own observation and remembrance, I would say that Colfax water was the hardest of the hard. For this reason, a cistern for storing rain water was always standard equipment for all the houses Father built for us to live in. The hand pump for rain water, which had seemed such a convenience in the cottage, was not good enough, Father said, for his fine new house. A force pump was installed in the basement, which was used to propel the soft water to a tank in the attic. From here the water was piped to the tank behind the kitchen range where it was heated for use in bath and kitchen.

One of the much disliked tasks for the boys of our household was the pumping of this soft water. Each boy tried to pass the job to the other. Mother partially solved the problem by delegating the chore to first one and then the other. By common consent, it became customary for each one so delegated to deliver at least a hundred strokes of water. There were seldom more than that minimum contributed. As a consequence, the water was always running out at most unpropitious times. We girls considered the time most unpropitious of all when none of the boys happened to be in evidence and the pumping job devolved upon us. It was a man's job, so we girls usually worked at it by two's, counting, "Pump one, Pump two, Pump three," making very sure that we didn't exceed the hundred quota, adequate to provide for immediate needs.

Father never seemed to have even considered the possibility that the attic tank might be filled to overflowing, for no outlet was installed. Apparently he miscalculated on this score. He exhibited too little faith in the flare-up type of industry his family could generate on occasion. At very rare intervals some of his flock would feel especially ambitious and continue pumping until the water did overflow and leak down through the ceiling of the hall below the tank. Then it became necessary for some one to make a hurried trip to the basement to tell the industrious offender to "cease and desist."

Most of the time in the summer we had to forego our hot water. In Iowa we didn't care much. The fires in our range were permitted to die down during this season, and we used a gasoline stove for cooking. Though a great many people at that time were afraid of gasoline stoves, Father wasn't, and he said he didn't want Mother to "bake herself over a hot stove."

Electricity was not introduced into Colfax until sometime during my childhood. I well remember the earlier street lights, which consisted of kerosene lamps perched on poles. A street lighter was engaged by the city, whose duty it was to keep these lamps in order and to go around at dusk every evening to light them, with a torch. Again in the morning he had to traverse the route again and extinguish the lights.

I can still recollect the evening when Father hurried home to announce that the new electric plant was now in operation and that electric street lights had been installed. He was much impressed. "I have made a test," he said, "and have discovered that from the light these little bulbs furnish I can make out the reading matter in a newspaper while standing in the middle of the block." We were impressed and lost no time in grabbing a newspaper and running to make the test ourselves.

But the real time for initiation arrived when we had electric lights installed in our house. How wonderful it was to enter a room and secure light by merely twisting a button! It mattered little to us then that these lights were not

attached to switches, but hung down by long cords in the center of each room, low enough for the shortest member of the family to reach and manipulate the buttons. Little did we care that when we entered a dark room, we found it necessary to discover the light by much waving of arms, many random movements, and finally accidental success. At least we were through with kerosene lamps and all the drudgery that went with them. It had been one of the distasteful duties of the household to fill all the lamps, wash them and trim all the wicks so that when lighted they would give a nice smooth rounded flame--not an ugly jagged one that spurted up in smoky points at the ends of the wicks. Finally, in the kerosene days we had had to wash and polish the lamp chimneys so that they shone clear and bright with no hint of smoke nor smear carried over from their use the evening before. Thomas Edison was gratefully installed in my individual imaginary Hall of Fame.

There were two other ways in which electricity revolutionized our house-keeping processes. Washing and ironing is no minor job for a family of ten or twelve, even at the best. Before the days of electricity, these two tasks presented a life-sized problem. I used to count the pieces of laundry. Each week we would have twenty-five or more bath towels, a dozen sheets, sixteen or eighteen men's shirts, and everything else in discouraging proportion. When one has washed and boiled and rinsed and hung up, and taken down and folded all these pieces, he knew he had done a day's work.

I can't remember when we didn't have a washing machine. The first one I remember was run by hand power, by means of a lever moved back and forth like a force pump. Mother, or one of us girls, supervised the washing. Running the machine was considered too tough an assignment for us, so this job usually devolved on one of the boys, or, in case they were otherwise engaged, a man of all work was employed.

When the boys helped, they spent their time while working in figuring out ways in which the job could be done more expeditiously. It may have been they who persuaded Father to purchase one of the water power machines when these came on the market. These machines were manipulated with a cylinder which was driven back and forth by the city water pressure. The boys were much elated at the purchase, for now another one of their weekly chores had been eliminated. They collected the first day we used the new machine for an interested inspection, then cleared out and were seldom seen in the wash room again. We were as pleased as they were to witness their departure. We were glad to have them from under foot. The water motor responded to our desires much more willingly than did the boys. It never talked back or argued as to whether a second suds or boiling the clothes was essential. The chief objective for the boys had been to get the washing done. Whether or not the finished product possessed that tattle-tale gray appearance mattered not at all.

When Newton started out on its career of establishing itself as the washing machine center of the world, we bought an electric washer. I can't remember whether ours was an Automatic, or a One-Minute, or a Woodrow, or a Maytag. All I know is that it was a shiny beautiful appliance which started to run by simply connecting it to the electric current, pushing a button and moving a lever. The first day we used it even the boys clamored for a hand in the washing.

Ordinarily we allowed nothing to interfere with washing on Monday. The Medes and the Persians scarcely had laws more inexorable than were ours with regard to the time at which the chief household duties were performed.

Tuesday was another grueling day. We ironed. When possible we used two boards. Two people would iron for eight hours or more before the bottom of the huge basket of tightly rolled clothes was reached. Those sixteen shirts, often made with starched and pleated bosoms and stiff, cold starched collars and cuffs consumed at least five hours of themselves. Then there were several three yard damask table cloths. There were starched pleated skirts for us girls. There were stiffly starched under skirts with several ruffles. No woman was properly dressed if those day's apparel was not at least two of these monstrosities. There were shirt waist and dresses, and handkerchiefs, and pillow cases and sheets,

and so forth and so on, and so forth and so on, ad infinitum.

Our first irons were very fittingly called "sad" irons. They were heated two or three at a time on the stove. While one was in use the others continued heating. Even the handles were of iron. Since even then the law of heat conduction was functioning and since iron was then as now, a good conductor, it was necessary for us to use a heavy pad six inches square in handling the irons. Even so, the palms of our hands were red and sometimes blistered at the end of the day. We developed callous places on our palms from much ironing.

A ritual connected with ironing was the testing of each iron as it was taken from the stove, with a finger moistened in the mouth. An experienced ironer could tell by the quality of the "sizzle" whether or not that particular iron had attained the proper temperature.

When detachable wooden handled irons were available on the market our hands fared better as to burns and callouses. The gasoline iron which we acquired next was still better. When we used this wonderful contraption, it was no more necessary to keep a hot fire raging through the day. These irons were made with a heating unit in the body of the iron. This was fed from a tank about the size of a small cup attached to the iron end of the iron. When this tank was filled with gasoline, the burner generated, and the iron allowed to heat, one could iron for the day without the nuisance chore of changing at frequent intervals to a hotter iron. Except for the presence of the tank, which sometimes obtruded itself in the way, it was almost as good as the marvelous electric iron which came later, only with the electric iron there was no generating to do and no sputtering noise. One just plugged in and ironed doggedly and silently. However, no improvement could ever take the drudgery out of ironing. That could only come, as it did in later years, by a change in our personal and housekeeping habits, the elimination, to a considerable extent of starch and pleats and ruffles in our wearing apparel, the wearing of softer, shorter and scantier clothing, the eating on bare tables, the use of paper to some extent for handkerchiefs, towels, and table linens.

In mid-century I have to smile when I see the little dab of ironing which presents itself to the average housekeeper. I smile again when I see the mangle on which she can do her flat work in a few jiffies. The world has pretty well come out victorious in the Battle of the Iron.

So now we did have a luxurious and comfortable home, with a view becoming broader and broader. Father was wont to say, "It is good I moved to town." One evening I heard him talking to Mother. "Do you know, Ma," he said facetiously, "that adversity fellow kicked me and my whole family up stairs. We would never have been where we are if it hadn't been for the depression."

Mother said, "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress."

But I puzzled over what Father said about being kicked up stairs. I did not relish the idea of any one's kicking my father around. However, he seemed happy about it, and I had not felt the impact of the "kick" which Father had said had been applied to the whole family, so I guessed there was no point in my being disturbed.

CHAPTER XI

The Battle of the Bugs

Vernon and insects must have presented much more of a problem in those days than they do at present. Mother was one of those who would not tolerate any such in her household, but keeping the house free from them did present a real problem. Our old inherited wooden beds seemed possessed. Every once in a while, in spite of all Mother could do, bed bugs put in their appearance. If one of us appeared some morning with the unmistakable tell-tale blotches on his face, Mother looked upon us with shocked concern, ignored everything she had planned for the day, armed herself with her can of gasoline and initiated the offensive campaign. Daily the offending bed must be taken apart and thoroughly fumigated with gasoline. Every article of furniture must be washed with the deadly elixir. Furniture that was kept standing all day in the sun to dry after fumigation were often,

But at intervals the bugs somehow returned. Mother finally gave up in despair and replaced the lot of beds with uninteresting iron ones, selling off the walnut "antiques" for a few cents. For a considerable number of years wooden beds were taboo in our household.

The fact that we waged such campaigns at rare intervals was one of the skeletons in our closet. Mother gave us strict orders. "This is one thing one never talks about," she said.

A similar skeleton was the fact that at least once while we were growing up Mother discovered vermin in our hair. I hesitate to say "lice" even today, for being host to such creatures was considered a deep disgrace. One did not even speak the word.

When we became thus infected, Mother selected a fine-toothed comb as her weapon of offense. The unfortunate affected victim sat at her knee while she combed out and disposed of the loathsome creatures. This was a daily ordeal until Mother assured herself that all the "nits" or eggs had hatched and had been exterminated. These "nits" attached themselves to the separate hairs, and could be detected by careful scrutiny.

I imagine, even then, there were drugs that could have been purchased that would have made such ordeals for extermination of vermin unnecessary, but Mother could not have used such measures under cover. She was not even willing to admit to the druggist that her family was temporarily in such disgrace.

Poor Mother! She would be horrified if she knew the skeletons from our old family closet were to be brought out and exposed to public view, and the fact of their presence recorded in black and white. However, this purports to be a story of the way life was lived in our part of the world at the turn of the century. By some later inquiry among fastidious people who grew up at the time, I have convinced myself that our family struggles with such vermin were not particularly exceptional, our closet skeletons were not unique. Yet today, a generation of youngsters is growing up which would not recognize either of these blood thirsty creatures if it were encountered.

Then there were the flies. Today we are driven to distraction if one fly invades the home. When we hear that disturbing "buzz," when we feel one of these creatures alight on our person or see him over over our food, we are rightfully much disturbed. We snatch our trusty fly swatter from its nail and go in for the slaughter.

When I was a very small girl, there were literally swarms of flies where there is one today. The idea that they could ever be exterminated was unthinkable. The best the housekeeper could hope to do was to make an effort to keep the pests out of the house. She did strive to imprison a few on "tanglefoot," a sticky fly paper, and a little later some people had receptacles of fly poison sitting around the house. But these counter measures were very ineffective and a nuisance in themselves. The tangiefoot had the propensity for sticking itself on other things such as children's hands and feet, or the wind could blow the paper so that it attached itself, dead flies and all, onto curtains or furniture. The poison decoctions were effective in poisoning children or other useful animals if these animals gained access to the poisons and happened to take a fancy to the sweet liquids in which these poisons were dissolved. So for the most part, we spent our efforts in driving the flies outside.

During the morning, if the sky were bright and sunny, the shades drawn, and the doors were opened, and if the flies could find the exits, they would go out of their own accord. It was our task to shew them the door. Several members of the family would provide themselves with towels, form a phalanx in the far corners of the house, and by waving these weapons of offense, gradually drive the flies toward the open doors. A goodly number of the creatures would evade the flittering banners, so it became necessary to conduct several sorties before the house was presented to be entirely clear of the pesky insects. Unfortunately, by afternoon, it was hot, and the flies wanted in again. They had settled

themselves back and became a living blanket on the screen doors and near by walls, ready to dart into the house at the first opportunity.

Some people tacked a fringe of slit papers to the top of the screen door in the effort to scare the flies away as the door was opened and closed. Many fastidious women made it a point to be at the door as much as possible to wave the flies away as people entered. I have heard children in many households come to the door and call, "I want in, Mamma."

In spite of all efforts to prevent it, the house seemed as full of flies the next morning as ever, and the campaign with the flourishing banners had to be waged all over again. It was quite a common practice in the farm homes of that day, to have one or two women delegated to the task of waving branches of trees over the tables to keep the flies away while the men ate their meals.

The fact that such conditions existed at the beginning of this century is almost unbelievable. If I had not seen it myself, it would be difficult for me to credit the story, in view of the fact that our homes today are comparatively free of flies.

I presume the scientists are mainly to be credited with the change. When the nefarious practices of the fly were made known, when his interesting but generally revolting life habits were universally recognized, when we found that a single fly was so constructed that he could carry as many as 6,000,000 loathsome bacteria on his body, then the task of exterminating him was begun. Breeding places were cleaned up and destroyed. People began to use sprays and inaugurated a universal swatting campaign. They gradually came to realize that however thick the flies might be, since each female fly could become a grandmother in twenty-one days, and become thus the matriarchal ancestor of a million descendants from April to September, killing one fly could at least accomplish something. The results in a few years were miraculous. Once more the "impossible" was accomplished. One of the gadgets most responsible was the common fly swatter. I should like to have been its inventor. I feel that whoever that person was, he performed his scout act for the world for a life time of days. I have placed him unnamed in my Hall of Fame.

CHAPTER XII

The Battle of the Cuisine

Meal time was an event at our house. Each meal was a gay, and, I must admit, at times, a rather noisy social occasion. We seldom hurried, but were accustomed to linger at the table a long time, a habit which became so thoroughly established with me, at least, that today I am often embarrassed to discover that my plate is still half full when other occupants of the table have finished. It's a disconcerting habit. I find myself compelled to follow one of two courses, either lay my utensils down, lean back in my chair and pretend I am satisfied, or continue eating and hold up the party. Neither course of procedure is satisfactory. Following the first plan and pretending I have had enough makes me very unhappy. Following the latter plan, nonchalantly continuing until I have finished, makes the waiters and undoubtedly the other guests unhappy. There is no place for a slow eater in this fast moving world.

On rare occasions if my father happened to be deeply immersed in his preparation for an important law suit, or if he had had the misfortune to have lost one, he sat silently through the meal, and apparently failed to realize that pandemonium was rearing in his immediate vicinity. As a rule, however, he seemed to have the ability and disposition to relax at meal time. It was at the table that Father got in his most telling "licks" in his character-training program. These strokes rarely consisted of scoldings and admonitions, but his lessons were concealed in casual conversation, in recounting of everyday incidents and happenings. Mary Doe had done a very unselfish and magnanimous deed. Upon hearing Father tell it, I then and there decided that was the kind of thing I would try to practice. John Doe had cheated in a business deal and thus spoiled everything up. I resolved that that kind of thing could never be said of me. It was usually at the dinner table that we received valuable lessons with regard to being discreet as to what we told others. With a sharp glance around the table, Father would say, "I am planning to do so and so, but I don't want this to be told outside the family."

Father and Mother lost no opportunity of calling in assistance in this subtle training program. Did a minister come to town, he was invited to our house for dinner. Did a strange lawyer or judge turn up at court, he ate with us. Thus we entertained, in our informal way, authors, teachers, preachers and "philosophers." These people appeared in tow, often without advance notice, sat down and made us think they thoroughly enjoyed our plebeian fare consisting perhaps of eggs, fried potatoes and sauerkraut.

At one time I fear we disgraced ourselves. We were having a rather famous guest for dinner. At any rate he was famous in our church circles. His name Dungan, and he had written a book, "Dungan on the Rock," a treatise on baptism. We had this volume in our home library, and were much impressed with the prospect of having a real live author as our guest. We talked a great deal about his coming, and Mother gave us the usual admonitions as to how we should conduct ourselves at his arrival. But Dick must have his fun. He spoke of Dr. Dungan constantly as "Mr. Doogan," which was the name of an old decrepit horse we had. We warned him that if he weren't careful, he would address him thus when he arrived. We may have put the idea into his mind.

Anyway, in the middle of the dinner, it happened. Dick, consciously or unconsciously said, "Have some more potatoes, Mr. Doogan." The rest of us were well nigh petrified at first, and then, as if by common consent, and in spite of ourselves, we burst forth in spasms of laughter. I doubt if Mr. Dungan observed Dick's faux pas, for Dick spoke in a rather low tone, but our laughter could not be overlooked. Dr. Dungan, with his piercing brown eyes, looked around the table in surprise and with some embarrassment, and then he looked at Father. Father did not fail with the proper paternal reaction. Several of us were sent from the table. Dick, the real culprit, sober and innocent appearing through it all, stayed on. Father had failed to hear Dick's impudent remark.

In those days if I had any opinion at all, I thought we were favoring these transient guests. Now I realize that, on the contrary, they contributed much more to us than we did to them. Mother never seemed to consider it any special hardship to have her overflowing schedule upset by these unexpected guests. There were ten of us to feed regularly. A few more or less made little difference.

Mother and Father maintained the same generous attitude toward our friends. We felt free to invite them as we wished. For Sundays Mother always prepared for any emergency. On Saturday she baked a huge batch of bread. She bought a huge pork roast and a huge beef roast, put them both into a roaster, huge also, filled the intricacies with piles of potatoes, built a fire in the range, shut off the dampers and the family departed for church. When we arrived home we set the table for whatever number trooped in. We had room at the table for a goodly number, for it was huge too, fifty-four inches wide and permanently extended to its full length of ten or twelve feet. If it happened to be a day on which twenty or more arrived, we had other tables, or could serve twice. Children in those days knew what it was to 'wait' and eat at the second table. If only five or six people presented themselves at the board, that was all right too. The food was of a type which would serve almost as well warmed over for the following day.

The inevitable aftermath of these big days was stacks and stacks of dishes, but these were soon dispatched, as guests and all "pitched in" to help. One or two started in to wash the glasses and silver ware. Others cleared and stacked. Still others washed the pots and pans, as others set the table for the next meal. What was the use of handling the dishes twice when once would do? When we did this, plates were turned over the silver service to keep them from the dust, and an extra cloth was spread over all. During the year the practice saved us hours of work.

As we "did" these huge stacks of dishes, we raced to see how soon we could get through. It is small wonder that we could with difficulty manage to keep enough knives intact to set the table. A very set of cups 'n' saucers in a relatively short time, knives and tumblers had to be replaced at frequent

intervals. Knives and forks soon disappeared. If I am not mistaken, the only dishes of the old days that have survived intact to the present are one lone willow ware plate, a blue hob-nailed tooth pick holder and a spoon holder. Inherited antiques are pretty much non-existent in our family.

The purpose of eating generally accepted in those days, was very different from what it is today. We did, of course, realize that we ate to keep alive, and we had a vague appreciation of the fact that food kept us fat and gave us strength, since we did get thin and weak if we failed to eat for a while. But it was considered that the diet that really "stuck to the ribs" was one made up largely of heavy foods--meat, potatoes, bread, butter and gravy. This diet was supplemented with vegetables and fruits, not so much because they were especially essential, but largely because these things tasted good, and because an efficient and satisfactory cook must serve a variety of food in order to have a good meal and thus via the stomach find the way to her men folks' hearts. Fruits and vegetables really came under the category of "frills." Anyhow, we were not urged to eat our carrots and green leafy vegetables for the reason that the vitamin A they contained would improve our eye sight and condition our membranes. We did not drink milk for its calcium and phosphorus content and its insurance against rickets and decaying teeth. We were not encouraged to eat liver because of its rich iron content, destined to maintain the working efficiency of the red corpuscles. We were not forced to take our cod liver oil in order to be sure we secured plenty of vitamin D, and we were not at all disturbed because in the middle west our diet was so deficient in iodine, a mineral which provided for the efficient functioning of our thyroid glands. Most of us didn't even know that our red blood corpuscles had a function or that we possessed a thyroid gland.

We had no fear that we would eat too great a proportion of heavy calory content food which might make us over weight. It was a sign of health to be fat anyway. No, eating was a pleasant activity in those days. Foods were foods and not semi-medicines. It was good for our peace of mind anyway that we didn't realize the necessity of having our daily glass of citrus fruit juice and our helping of leafy and root vegetables. We depended for our fresh vegetables upon our own gardens and those of our neighbors. During the long winter in the middle west, at least in small towns, we saw no lettuce or celery or fresh tomatoes displayed in the stores for sale. An orange was a rare treat, usually reserved for Santa's Christmas gift in our stockings.

But we did manage to get enough vitamins and minerals so that the fittest of us lived out our three score years and ten. The national average of us women, however, failed to get beyond the age of fifty years. Our average man succumbed at forty-five. The food we ate, chosen more or less blindly, was "good" food, even though of a different nature from that we eat today.

When we moved to town in 1891, Father included in the caravan two cows, several pigs and a flock of chickens. These were installed in a barn on the premises, a building which was pretty much standard equipment for the town homes of that day. A feed lot was provided, and arrangements were made for renting a pasture a half-mile or so away, to which the cows were driven daily throughout the summer months. Thus we were assured of plentiful supply of proteins in the form of milk, pork and eggs.

Mother permitted the cream to rise on the crocks of milk and skinned it off with a cup. If any of the cream soured before we used it up, we churned it and made butter. It wasn't fun to stand and plunge the dasher up and down, in the ten gallon churn until the butter came. At times the butter droplets were so perverse and so reluctant to make their appearance. We breathed a sigh of relief when finally the small yellow particles began to form around the dasher on the upward strokes as the dasher emerged through the opening in the lid of the churn. We hopefully called Mother. She usually inspected the contents of the churn, replaced the cover, gave a few vigorous strokes herself.

"Just fifty more strokes," she would say. We managed them, then raced to the outside while Mother worked the butter milk out of the butter with a wooden paddle, cut the butter and formed it into a rounded roll on a platter. The butter milk she poured into a pitcher, which she put aside as a special treat for Father.

and the boys.

The milk that soured was left standing until it became so thick one could cut it with a knife. This was clabber. There were two ways in which this could be used. It could be stirred up and drunk as another special treat, or it could be placed over a slow fire where Dutch Cheese finally evolved. This was removed from the whey, mixed generously with cream, salted, and arrived on the table as another extra special. The whey that was left could be fed to chickens or pigs, or used in the next batch of bread. There was still good food value in it.

As for us, we were pleased when cow production was at a low ebb, so that we had no accumulation of cream to sour and churn. At such times we had a standing order for ten pounds of country butter each week. In the days of fat shortage during World War II in my mind's eye I could see with a considerable amount of nostalgia those mammoth yellow rolls as they came to us with their artistic, uniform decorations, made expertly by indentations of the butter paddle, an achievement which had given the butter maker a considerable amount of satisfaction.

Milk was our staple beverage. We were never permitted, when children, to drink tea or coffee. Soft drinks in bottles were unknown to us in our younger days, and anyway Mother would no doubt have considered buying them an "illegitimate" way of spending money.

Spring brought another beverage to which we looked forward. After the long winter, for some unknown reason our blood had become so supposedly thickened that Mother felt compelled to serve us sassafras tea to "thin it down." Drinking this was no hardship for us. It was brewed from sassafras bark and produced a reddish colored drink, which when sweetened, was "tops" as a beverage. If the sassafras tea failed to give the desired dilution to the blood, if we still showed symptoms of spring fever, Mother gave us spoonfuls of sulphur and molasses. Those two remedies were usually sufficient to "summerize" us and to keep us in tip top condition for the year. Apparently we did not need to be "winterized" for the fall. I take it that process was automatic. A few children, unfortunately for them, and all those within "nose shot," had to wear bags of asaetetida around their necks to make them healthy. Older people warded off rheumatics by carrying buckeyes in their pockets. Keeping well was simple and cheap in those days. The medicine was not bitter. The one difficulty was that so many people died.

We bought flour in job lots of fifty pound sacks which we stored on specially constructed scaffolding in the attic, to protect it from possible invasion of mice. From this flour came various good things. About twice a week Mother baked large loaves of crusty white bread, the like of which is seldom, if ever, seen today. Sometimes, when we arrived from school and our nostrils were assailed by that delicious aroma of fresh bread, we were able to persuade Mother to break up a hot, steamy, crunchy loaf for our immediate consumption. Piled high with lumps of that sweet, yellow butter, I can conceive of nothing more delightful.

Cakes and pies were rare at our house. I don't know whether their scarcity came from a conviction Mother had that they were too rich for our blood, or whether she just didn't find the time to bake them. Our desserts mostly consisted of bread spread thick with butter and sugar, or jam or jelly which had been put up in gallon crocks or two quart jars, or bread topped with sorghum molasses or honey. Sometimes we put our concocted "desserts" in a bowl and ate them with cream. Cinnamon rolls, practically always accompanied the bread making and they were greeted with delight. Mother didn't save on sugar or cinnamon when she made these. I can still remember the rich candy-like undercrust that tasted so good. We devoured dozens of these rolls and still hoped more would be forthcoming from the kitchen. Who would miss pies and cakes when one had such delicious desserts?

The flour we bought furnished us at times a favorite breakfast food, - pancakes. They were rarely served, because of the piles of them we were wont to

consume, and the consequent time it took before the last consumee admitted happily that he was surfeited. We liked wheat cakes best, but now and then Father would call for buckwheats. These had to be "set" the night before with yeast. The slightly sour, yeasty flavor was supposed to provide an unusual treat. Once the batter was properly "set," a portion of it was saved from day to day to give the proper leaven for the next day's "batch." Thus, buckwheats, when once prepared, became the breakfast for several days.

"Minute pudding" may have been a family invention, designed to fill us up with something cheap and something that could be made with dispatch. It was simply a thick paste made by stirring flour into boiling, salted water. We ate the resulting "pudding" with cream and sugar, and always asked for a second helping. A disgraceful incident will serve to show the popularity of this dish. At one time Dick helped himself to all the minute pudding that was left. Milo decided he wanted some and asked Dick to "divvy up." Dick refused. He held his hand over the dish in question, awaiting his opportunity to begin eating, while the boys sparred back and forth about dividing up. Finally, Mother was called to the kitchen. Milo watched his chance, reached across, grasped the pudding in his hand, and squeezed it through his fingers. We looked on in amazement and incredulity, but just then Mother returned, and all Dick could do was to shove his dish of desecrated pudding aside and look daggers at Milo, a look which clearly meant, "Just you wait. I'll get even with you."

I must say that repeated experiments in later years have failed to produce a minute pudding that seemed to be very fit for human consumption. I don't understand this. And I don't understand why "shadow soup" is so insipid now, when it used to taste so good. This soup may have been another of Mother's prize inventions. "Shadow" was a good name. For this soup she saved the water in which the potatoes had been boiled, seasoned it with salt and pepper and plenty of butter. We ate it with crackers or bread and liked it. Regular potato soup with round, crumbly pieces of noodles such as we used to have often on such days, I can still enjoy, but the "shadow" soup had apparently lost all its charms.

Potatoes and apples were bought by wholesale and stored in great bins in the basement cellar. We could eat as many apples as we wished, but woe unto us if we ate a few bites of one and then threw it away! Even if there were quantities of them, we could not waste them. I can still remember some of the varieties. There were Ben Davis, Willow Twigs, June apples, and Grimes Golden.

The small, scarred unprepossessing looking apples were put through the cider mill and came out sweet cider, a beverage, now practically obsolete. The acid taste of the commercial variety one buys hopefully in jugs today always brings a sad disillusionment to a cider taster of these early days. It bears little resemblance to its home-made forbear.

Potato peeling was a task. It wasn't alone that we must cook such huge kettles of potatoes. Unfortunately all of the six children of the family, big and little, liked potatoes raw. The unfortunate "peeler" would arrive from the basement or cellar with what he legitimately estimated would be sufficient "spuds" for the day, but as he peeled he was apt to be surrounded by a ring of "barkers" asking for a hand cut. I have known the pile to become depleted before the last one of the group became surfeited, that the one who happened to be the abused vector must repair to the bins, not once but several times, to supplement his supply.

CHAPTER XII

The Battle of the Cuisine, Continued

Each summer we canned hundreds of quarts of fruit. We had cherries, plums, gooseberries, apples. Canning and the preparation of many of the other foods we had very little opportunity to do. The washing of those handfuls of cherries and plums and pickles and apples, sitting on the floor in the sun,

after school awaiting our manipulation of the cherry seeder and the apple peeler and the paring knife and the chopper and slicer, dampens my ardor for much of that sort of work today.

Kegs of sauerkraut were prepared by the same sort of co-operative effort. We made it in the good old way. Each layer was sliced and salted and stomped down so that the juice was extracted to cover it. When the keg was full, the potential kraut was covered with a cloth and a board, weighted down with a rock or some other heavy article. Then the keg of cabbage was placed in a fairly warm place to await fermentation. When this process began, the odor that pervaded the house was a little disturbing, but the finished product was most delicious, crisp and salty sour.

On butchering days the members of the family helped cut up the meat and grind the sausage. That night we always had tenderloin patties for supper, as a treat for our labors. Eating the patties we felt well repaid. The next day we had pork sausage, sweet and tender, and seasoned just right with salt, pepper and sage. We had fresh side meat, and chops and roasts, spare ribs with lots of meat on them, and hog's liver served with fried onions. We had almost to surfeit ourselves for a while on pork, and sit all day with our fingers crossed for fear the freezing weather would turn warm and finish up the remainder of the pork before we had time to do so. It was a mad race, but we usually won, with apparently no harmful effects from the excessive pork consumption. During the pork orgy we must have laid by a large supply of vitamin B, but at the time we were entirely oblivious of the fact.

As we cut up the meat during the butchering process, Mother would say, "Be sure to cut off most of the fat. Throw it into this large earthenware jar. Tomorrow I'll render it into lard." She "rendered" it by cooking the fat in large iron kettles, watching carefully to see that the grease did not get hot enough to scorch and thus ruin her precious lard. As the fat cooked out, she kept boiling and stirring until the solid portions she planned to skim out were reduced to "cracklins," crisp, crusty, and good to eat, we thought, but Mother had designs on these too. She said, "Don't eat too many. They may make you sick. Besides, I want to make soap out of what is left, some day soon."

The soap making was accomplished by boiling the cracklins in lye water. This dissolved the cracklins. She tested the mixture to see if it was done by lifting the paddle with which she stirred. If the liquid, as it ran off the paddle, seemed about the consistency of honey, it was ready to remove from the fire, pour into boxes to the proper depth, be cooled and cut later into bars of soap. In college years I met the principle underlying this process in a chemistry class under "saponification." I little dreamed, when I encountered that high sounding term that what I would read would simply be a description and scientific explanation of a process that had become familiar to me several years before under the homely term of "soap-making." I felt as if I were meeting an old friend with whom I found I was to become better acquainted. The term "lye" took on a new meaning as if fitted itself into my general conception of the term "alkali." The reaction which my teacher explained to us as resulting from the mixture of the fat and the alkali contributed in the unfolding of a new and thrilling world for me -- the world of chemistry. I was finding that each new field I studied gave more reason for my thinking, "Isn't life grand," and I thought, "Without study one lives on the surface. The best of life is hidden away."

But in that early day we were merely interested in securing a goodly supply of soap and lard and meat for the winter. When the butchering and grinding and pickling and rendering were completed, there was left scarcely a grease spot of the carcass of the poor pig which had been carried into the basement a few days before.

Living as we did in the heart of the belt "where the tall corn grows," we made good use of it for food. In other sections of the country corn may be thought good only for pigs and chickens and cows and horses. We knew better.

We made hominy. We shelled the corn and Mother cooked it first in lye water until the hulls cracked off. After the tough hulls were removed and the lye water thoroughly washed out, the corn had to be boiled for several hours. Then it was hominy. It was exquisite eaten with cream or milk, or fried in butter.

Some of our neighbors always managed to raise a little popcorn which they shared with us. We usually had a flour sack full stored in a damp cool place where the mice couldn't get at it. On winter evenings we shelled enough for immediate use by rubbing one ear against another. We popped dish pans full of it, seasoned it with salt and a generous portion of butter, and sat sociably around the table as we devoured it. The "old maids" were ground in the coffee mill and eaten the next morning with milk or cream, a much better tasting breakfast food, if you ask me, than any of the packaged cereals which appeared on the market years later.

According to the usual custom on the farms and in small towns of the times, we had dinner at noon, supper at night. One of our favorite supper dishes was corn bread. Mother was expert at making corn bread. We loved the crunchy sound of the brown crust as we ate it. Often we ate corn bread and milk. Corn mush and milk was another favorite. Mother cooked this mush a long time in a large iron kettle of the type in which witches are wont to brew their herbs. When the mush boiled, I used to like to watch the huge, puffy bubbles form and burst explosively, each giving out a wisp of steam. The mush that was left over we molded into a square pan to cool. We had it later, sliced and fried with lots of grease on a large iron griddle which was perhaps a foot wide and about two feet long. I can't remember that we ever got enough of this dish.

In those days fried foods were not frowned upon as they are today. I still like them, but I suppose I shall have to confess to a perverted taste developed in childhood. However, I often, today, let discretion go by the boards and indulge myself in food that I consider good instead of food that is good for me. Who wants to be thoroughly and consistently discreet?

But roasting ears were the best of all. We planted this corn in the garden in spring. It was a special sweet, tender variety of corn, much more so than one gets in the stores today. Besides, corn is never so good as it is when it comes directly from the field, is husked and cooked immediately before the milk in the corn has opportunity to harden. We ate such quantities of this in the spring that we had to resort at times to the wash boiler for a vessel large enough to cook it in. We ate with such abandon that our cheeks were covered with butter and stray kernels of corn. Father us to say, "I guess we will have to set your ears back or they will get full of corn."

We patronized Sammie Jackson in the purchase of sorghum molasses, and we ate gallons of it. The boys had a way of mixing chunks of butter with their molasses until the decoction was almost white, before they spread it on their bread. That was fine for securing a nice supply of vitamin A, but it made inroads on that large, yellow roll of butter. I have at times of recent years been tempted to purchase some of the modern commercial variety of sorghum molasses. In comparison with Sammie Jackson's it seems thin and practically devoid of that good sorghum flavor. In some cases it tastes scorched and strong. Sammie's never did. We always liked to go with Father to the Jackson's when we needed to have our molasses jars filled. We found watching the various vats of boiling, bubbling, snapping syrup a most intriguing pastime.

In the summer we had vegetables from our garden. We must have been quite famished for green stuff. I shall never forget how good the lettuce tasted. We ate it "wilted," which meant with a hot dressing of bacon grease, salt and diluted vinegar, or we ate it with a cold dressing made of cream, sugar and vinegar. Modern salad dressings were unknown. In fact, I don't believe the word "salad" had ever been coined. I never heard it.

We had tomatoes which we ate with salt, or sometimes with cream and sugar. Between meals we would pick a firm, red, fully ripened, sun-warmed tomato from the vines, cut it in two, spread it generously with salt, rub the two halves together, and enjoy a feast. Why tomatoes tasted different and better that way than they did the regulation way at the table, I shall never be able to tell you.

We had radishes and onions. We had cucumbers soaked in salt water to "take the poison out" and then covered with diluted vinegar. In season we canned gallons of these cucumbers to make pickles, and chopped hogsheads of them to make picallili (or was it only bushels).

We had peas and beans and sweet corn and potatoes, turnips and squash in the garden. All these produced for us in abundance. About all we did was to plant the seeds. Fortunately, irrigation was unnecessary in the good state of Iowa. Both vegetables and weeds grew prolifically in the rich black soil, and we let nature take its course. After the garden was in, Mother was far too busily occupied with other duties to see that we youngsters kept the place weed-ed and cultivated as any self respecting garden needs to be. We were apparently unashamed and oblivious to the garden's feeling in this respect. But when harvest time came, we pushed aside the forest of weeds and came forth with baskets of super fine succulent produce. It was almost like receiving manna from Heaven.

You will observe the absence of carrots, Swiss chard, rutabagas, broccoli and cauliflower from our garden. Most of these I never saw until I was grown. Carrots were not popular for human consumption. Their yellow color had no significance to us. We passed them by, and doctored our eyes at intervals with applications of tea leaves. We had messes of "greens" early in the spring, the wild variety. We picked the tender leaves of dandelions before they began to bloom. Sometimes we used mustard or sauer dock.

In the month of May we went foraging for mushrooms, the kind that look like sponges. We were "in the know" with regard to their secret haunts. Immediately after a rain we would sally forth and return with perhaps a half bushel of them. That day was a red letter day in the commissary department. Rolled in flour and fried brown in butter the mushrooms furnished a luscious tid-bit.

In the fall we went nutting. Those were the days before "No Trespassing" signs were erected. Forested land was considered practically public domain. Whoever arrived on the scene first secured the nuts. We always managed to get a plentiful winter's supply of black walnuts, butternuts, hickory nuts and hazel nuts. These were spread out to dry on all available flat roofs and unused floors. When the job of hulling began, the boys' hands for several weeks were of a matter of despair for fastidious parents and teachers. The walnut stain refused to yield to ordinary scrubbing, and, as I remember, had to wear off. It did -- in time.

Other wild products we thought were first class treats were redhaws, choke berries, wild puckery crab apples, sour wild gooseberries, sheep sorrel and pepper grass.

Little food was ever wasted at our home. Left overs were surreptitiously added to other foods where they would not be detected, or they would turn up at the table in disguised form, having been skillfully transformed to other and perhaps more popular dishes. We served family style and were expected to determine the size of our helpings by making an estimate of what was our rightful share of each particular dish, be it large or small. If I took a lion's share, someone around the table was sure to observe it and call out under his breath, "Pass your plate, Grace." This initiated a rising chorus, "Yes, pass your plate, Grace," "Pass your plate, Grace," "Pass your plate, Grace," and fastened the attention of the whole ten upon me. One did not care to undergo that sort of barrage very often. One experience seemed to temper our desire to indulge ourselves too freely at the expense of the others. Learning to estimate a tenth of a dish full of potatoes or corn or beans gave us valuable arithmetic training when we were very young. Within rightful share limits we could have as much as we wished, but what we took out on our plates we were expected to eat. Otherwise, Mother would say, "I guess your eyes were bigger than your stomach this time. After this go easy." Every meal thus presented a series of problems. We didn't want to take too much, as the food might not prove to

be as good as we anticipated, and we would have heroically to eat more than we cared to eat. We didn't want to take too little, for in case the food proved to be particularly good, we knew that when the proper time arrived for a second helping, there would in all probability be nothing left.

If Mother found us slipping from the thrift standard she set for us, she had several maxims which were presumed to return us to the straight and narrow, though less pleasing path. I recollect several of them. One was, "Members of a household can throw out with a teaspoon all a man can bring in with a shovel." Another was, "A good cook never throws out a spoonful of good food." Still another, "There are lots of people in the world who would be glad to have that good food." So now, when I feel tempted to boost out a left over potato or a small piece of meat, I say to myself, "Well, that is a spoonful of good food. There are lots of people in the world who would be glad to have that good food," and I go to all the trouble of storing the little dab away and of figuring out a way of using it at some future meal. It is quite a bother to be saddled from childhood with such a frugal habit. It would be much simpler to give the food the considered boost in the first place.

Managing not to waste a spoonful of food was a first class problem in my early childhood, since, in the summer time, adequate provisions for refrigeration were not available. When we first moved to town, we kept such food in the "cellar" of the house. This was scarcely more satisfactory for the purpose than the old milk tank at the farm, since the temperature of these cellars was not cold enough in summer. Some people made caves in which they kept milk and butter and vegetables. When we moved into the big house, Father purchased a man-sized refrigerator, which proved a much better solution of the problem. We thought at the time that the solution was perfect. We could not conceive of better refrigeration. The ice was cut from Winder's Pond every winter and stored in sawdust in a large ice house near by. This ice was delivered to our door during the summer months. Having ice was wonderful. It relieved us of the constant shuttling back and forth from cellar to kitchen, and kitchen to cellar, to fetch and return the milk and butter and the eggs and vegetables in sufficient quantities to satisfy the enormous appetites of our brood. Besides, it was of great assistance to Mother in her campaign to see to it that none of us ever wasted a "teaspoonful of good food."

Mother observed her own precepts with regard to saving. We had to learn to peel potatoes paper thin. When we had poured as much syrup as we could from the syrup pitcher, she insisted that the pitcher be rinsed out and the rinsings added to the vinegar jug. When foods were dished up for the table, every speck must be scraped out, a first class problem without the little rubber scrapers we have in our kitchens today. When apples were peeled for sauce or apple butter, she boiled the peelings and made jelly. We must go to the trouble of untangling and rolling for future use all string that came into the household. We saved all bottles and all pasteboard boxes until our storage space demanded they be dispensed with. Even then it hurt Mother to discard them.

On the whole we had good appetites. We must have eaten tons of food when we were growing up. With the milk we drank, each of us must have consumed about four pounds a day. That would figure up about a half ton per capita per year, or seven and one-half tons for the family. This is an impressive amount of food, almost as much as it took coal to heat the house.

It is now first class mystery to me how we were ever able to get enough food into the house and prepared for the table to satisfy us. And it is a mystery to me how Father was ever able to pay for it. Staples we bought at one of the stores, usually, Boilhoeffer's. We called up over the telephone and had them delivered. We ran a charge account. Father was like many men of the time. He didn't like to receive monthly statements. At that time these statements were considered "duns" and sending them to a customer infested an insulting letter that one would not pay his bills. So Father arranged with Mr. Boilhoeffer to give us unlimited credit and then whenever the good grocer wanted his money, he would go across to the office and collect. I think Mr. Boilhoeffer also had

suffering, or perhaps he just didn't find time to make the trip across the street very often. Anyhow, I have known our bills to run for a year and I have seen my father write out a check for a thousand dollars in payment. Such a check for groceries still leaves me aghast.

Our table appointments were not particularly elegant, but along with other household equipment, showed an evolutionary trend. The first knives and forks and spoons I remember were made of steel with bone handles. Stainless steel was unknown at the time. Ordinary steel does stain with a vengeance. Thus, one of our daily chores incident to dish washing was to scour these utensils. For this purpose we kept a piece of ordinary soft brick on a board underneath the sink. Each day we shaved off a sufficient amount of this to use for such scouring. I never heard of silver polish until I was grown, neither did I know of S O S, nor Chore Boy, nor Bon Ami. Knives and finger nails were used for scraping. In extreme cases we found it necessary to permit pans to soak in water until the next meal. Mother sometimes thought we were inclined to take advantage of this privilege. At times we did not see eye to eye with her with regard to what constituted an "extreme necessity."

Our next table ware was of German silver, silver alloy. It did not tarnish and relieved us of the necessity of so much polishing. We hailed the purchase of this with delight. One still sees this type of table ware at certain restaurants, but I must say that I, for one, do not now greet its appearance with delight. It has a rather dull appearance, is thick set, and has a rather slick, oily feeling to the touch. Mother's first Rogers Brothers and sterling silver were presented to her by members of the family after they were grown and working.

As to linens, Mother was rather fastidious from the first, at least within my remembrance. I do remember one or two red-checked cotton tablecloths left over from farm days, but when Mother bought new, she insisted on a good quality of linen. So we either used good linen or we ate on white oilcloth, a practice common at that time to save linens and washing and ironing.

As I write this chapter, I wonder if the food in those days was really so much superior to what we have now, or was my psychology teacher correct in later years when she said that our taste buds are more numerous and more acutely sensitive to food flavors in our youth. Though the theory sounds logical, to accept it whole-heartedly subtracts some of the joy I get from reminiscing. I hope my teacher won't mind if I accept the "bud" theory with my mind and reject it with my feelings.

CHAPTER XIV

The Battle of the Needle

The sewing was a bug bear. In those days commercially made clothing was very uncommon, except for coats and suits. It then devolved upon the women of the household to fashion, fit and sew. I had begun sewing in self-defense while I was still in high school. Mother had so much to do that she couldn't keep up with the seasons. Often we found ourselves compelled to wear winter clothing far into the spring, and summer clothing as far into autumn. That didn't go well with high school youngsters. In the spring we were always practically "roasting alive" before Mother got around to ferreting out our spring clothing. We would tell her that all of the other kids were wearing new spring clothes. We would protest our wool underwear by scratching ostentatiously before her. We would fan ourselves and try to look as flushed and miserable as possible. We would evade her watchful eye and slip off to school without coats on. I have a suspicion, now, that she was well aware that a considerable amount of our seeming distress was psychological, worked up in our own minds to suit our own purposes. I think she knew that we were tired of the clothes we were wearing and she no doubt knew that we were so eager for spring to appear that we thought by donning spring apparel we could half and temper the chill March winds. Our complaints seemed to fall on deaf ears. Every spring we continued to have a spell of "roasting alive." Every fall for a time we "froze to death."

Finally I decided to take things into my own hands. At least I would see to it that I had a few seasonal clothes available to get into. I began to sew. I bought myself a Butterick pattern, a couple of yards of flanellette for a blouse, and audaciously started in. The maxim about fools rushing in might well be applied to my first efforts. Mother had never been particularly adept at sewing. She never wanted to cut anything off for fear she might need the detached portion later. I thought she was too particular in some respects. For these reasons I didn't go to her for advice except in extreme emergency. My learning, under the circumstances, was mainly a trial and error process. Gradually I learned not to make two sleeves for the same arm, how to co-ordinate foot and hand movements in the use of the foot power machine, how to adjust the tension so that an accidental pull on a thread would not ravel out a whole seam, how to take in here and let out there so that I would have a smooth fitting garment, and how to make French seams. No self respecting seamstress of that day would think of leaving raw edges. The inside of the garment must be just as free of loose threads and raw seams as the outside.

When Mother was around, she insisted that everything should be basted in place before the final stitching. By watching my chances I could evade her unwelcome supervision. In this respect, I learned and practiced the art of pinning as a substitute for basting. By the time I took charge of the house keeping, by use of much short cutting I could go along with the sewing at a fairly good speed. By getting an early start and taking advantage of the fact that Leo and Lois got supper and washed the dishes, if everything went well, I could sometimes finish up a cotton dress in an afternoon. One of us sometimes wore a dress or shirt waist in the evening that I had started after dinner. I can't imagine a dress turned out with so much dispatch having much style or much to recommend it so far as modern ideas of fine tailoring are concerned, but we wore these garments happily. It is possible they compared favorably with the dresses of our friends, since in the middle class group of those days there was always considerable evidence in wearing apparel of inexperienced and "loving hands at home." I must say that I did not always feel satisfied with the finished product, but Mother was encouraging. She would say, "Don't worry about that. It will never be seen on a trotting horse."

Sometimes, if the sewing got beyond us, we engaged a sewing woman to come in for several days and "sew us up." There were some of these women who were quite expert in attaining some style and finish to the garments, but many were no better than the home seamstress, and frequently not so good. Whether we did the work ourselves or engaged a dressmaker, a considerable upheaval in the family life and hours of work were involved. Having a dressmaker meant cooking good meals for her, planning and fitting the garments, helping with the stitching and hand work in every spare moment, making sure she had material and "findings" on hand. These findings included patterns, thread, trimmings, lining, crinolins, stays, braids, buttons, hooks and eyes, dress shields and what not. We used yards and yards of lace edging and insertion and banding. The ruffles and flounces of my high school graduating dress were edged with fifteen yards of lace, all laboriously stitched on with fine stitches by hand. I estimate there were probably sixteen stitches to the inch, which, according to my arithmetic, would mean over 8000 stitches in all, and when the lace was on, the dress was scarcely begun. Still, Mother thought the price pretty high when she paid the dressmaker five dollars for making the dress. In addition to the lace trimming we had tucks and embroidery. Often the whole front of a sheer waist was of fine "pin tucks."

I suppose if the sewing we had to do for one year can be thought of as piled neatly on a table all at once, it would probably have reached the ceiling. Let us say there would have been material for twelve dresses for us women, two each for summer and four for winter, three shirts for Father, three long ruffled petticoats, three short ones, three pairs of ruffled drawers, three corset covers, twenty yards of muslin for making sheets and pillow cases, twelve yards of crish for making roller towels, two yards of ticking for making new pillows, a sack of feathers in eleven sized bags, the two we had eaten to fill them, two covers for comforter and quilts with linings and cotton

and wool for filling, besides a half-dozen or more garments for re-modeling.

In addition to the regular sewing, there was always the overflowing basket of mending, enough to warrant the setting aside of a precious morning (Wednesday) each week, to provide time to keep the contents of the basket within reasonable proportions. We darned and patched and sewed up rips and sewed on buttons. But Mother balked when the clothes got too bad. She always said, "Patch by patch is neighborly, but patch upon patch is beggarly." While we didn't have much money, we must not give the false impression that we were beggars.

Along side the huge pile of sewing there were also baskets of hand work. Never a girl or woman who didn't have such "fancy work" at hand convenient to pick up and work at at odd times, when waiting for the family to arrive for meals, when callers came, or in the evenings when the day's work was done. Such work was "recreational." We crocheted and knitted and embroidered and tatted, and we used the finished product on underwear, blouses, towels, table linen, wash cloths and bed linens. As part of such recreational work we took out left-over cotton pieces and pieced them painstakingly by hand into quilt tops. We afterward quilted the quilts on frames with fine even stitches. We filled the comfort tops with cotton or wool bats and tied them with bright colored yarns.

I suppose we did this fancy work to occupy our hands and to put us at ease with folks instead of smoking cigarettes.

As to the sewing, it is understandable as one views in retrospect, that huge pile of material which must eventually be fashioned unto usable shape, that the afternoons of that time were as religiously set aside for sewing as were the mornings for the heavier household duties. We couldn't afford to waste much day time in purely recreational pursuits.

As we planned our wardrobes, we put a considerable amount of time and thought on our "accessories." We liked our jewelry, but we were fastidious. No well-groomed person would ever think of using cheap "costume" jewelry popular some years later. No, our rings and lockets and bracelets and "breast pins" must be of solid gold or very good plated ware.

At one time everyone wore "spikes." These were used to finish the ends of cascade's of trimmings as on our belts or ties. They were slender, hollow, engraved, cone-shaped metal objects, about three inches long and about the size of a small lead pencil. As we moved they would clash together, giving out a pleasant, tinkling sound which gave us much satisfaction.

We used jabots for a finishing touch to our necks. These were usually made of lace. Some had a small strip of black or colored velvet ribbon run through them to add character to our costumes.

How we wished when we were youngsters that Mother hadn't been so thrifty! She was as saving of cloth as she was of victuals. Nothing in the cloth line ever was actually destroyed. The part we didn't like about this frugal streak in Mother was that when she inspected our wardrobes at the beginning of each season, the initial consideration was, "What do we already have that can be handed down intact, or washed, turned, pressed and remodelled for the next in succession?" When the garment was finally assigned to her satisfaction, it did little good for us to say we didn't like it, that it was too tight, we could hardly breathe in it, or that it was too long, or too short. Men's shirts were made into aprons and dresses for small children. Old shirts were made into pants for little boys. Once we had a wind sail of which we didn't complain. Cousin Jessie retrieved for us a box of dresses from a wealthy relative. We thought these were elegant. Mother didn't have to persuade us to wear the things she contrived for us out of that box. We had never seen dresses made of such material or in such style. When we wore them they caused much favorable comment among our associates. We hoped the fine garments would create the impression that we were becoming wealthy.

In the sewing process, left-over pieces from dressmaking were cut into blocks for quilts or comforters. Flour and sugar sacks were used for lin-

towels. White clothes finally found their way to the rag drawer where they were used for cleaning purposes. Those that were unfit for that were stuffed into the bag for paper rags. These paper rags netted Mother a few cents when the "rag man" made his rounds. Mother was glad to get the extra pennies, but I surmise the fact that she didn't have to throw these things away pleased her even more than did the money receipts.

CHAPTER XV

My Day

At intervals and for comparatively short periods of time we had a "hired girl" to do the work--not a maid. People in books had maids, but real people in the real world of that day had "hired girls," at least so far as my experience went. The two types of household help were quite different. Maids wore black dresses and white caps, said "Madam" and "Sir," even when talking to the children of the household, ate in the isolation of the kitchen, waited on tables with expertness and dispatch, answered the door bell, and ushered visitors into high-ceilinged drawing rooms to wait while she went to inform some member of the family that guests had arrived. In contrast, a "hired girl" was more or less a member of the family. She wore no distinguishing costume, ate with the family and played games with them. She went to church with the family, rejoiced at their good fortunes and mourned with them if sorrow came. She even undertook, at times, to discipline the youngsters. I remember Mrs. Bryant, who, I think, was the original sugar rationer. When she thought we had used enough, she would return the sugar bowl to its place in the cupboard. No amount of teasing could persuade her to change the edict that we were through, that we had had our sugar ration. Mother seemed indifferent to this usurpation of her authority. I don't remember that we ever appealed to her. It is possible that she felt relieved to receive a little assistance along the hard path toward the transforming of her brood into civilized and healthy human beings. Mother, herself, was not too enthusiastic about our using a large amount of sugar anyway. In fact, her parting, half-facetious injunction when at rare intervals she left us to take care of ourselves was, "Don't get into the sugar." One device she used in her "be easy on the sugar" campaign was to teach us to eat at least one pancake without syrup.

Another "hired girl" furnished us children with a considerable amount of amusement, inasmuch as she thought she could play the organ. Her playing consisted of elaborate maneuvers up and down the key board in a completely haphazard and unmelodious manner. When we had company, we would always get Anna to play for us. Then, I regret to say, we would get out of sight, and indulge in unseemly laughter at her expense. I hope we always got out of sight.

As I see it now, I think it possible that Anna may have been having her little joke with us. She may have pretended, in order to further the fun she found it made for us.

Most of the time we did our own work cooperatively. I fear we left the lion's share for Mother, until after her attack of illness. From then on, Mother gradually grew to be much less a person to look after us, much more of a person to be looked after. We were very proud of Mother in later years. We marcelled and combed her hair. We looked after her clothes. She was very tiny, not even five feet tall. She was modern in spirit, insisting on having her hair bobbed after she was seventy years old. She told us her hair was bobbed when she was married and that "Papa" liked it that way. We didn't encourage the hair cutting experiment, but found when her soft, white hair was cut and marcelled, when she put on her size twelve gray dress with the pink flower on the shoulder, she made a pretty picture, the kind that strangers would look at and admire. At one time I had a college friend come to visit me. When she saw Mother for the first time, she exclaimed, "Oh, a Dresden China lady!" At last we knew that Mother was lovely.

My father always thought Mother was something special. From the time of her illness, we followed his lead and indulged her. Father sat on a portion of

her dress or apron at meal time so that she could not jump up and wait on the table. I think we may have made her somewhat uncomfortable by insisting that she did not work at all.

Work for girls and work for boys was quite sharply distinguished in those days. The boys did very little in the house. The girls did little outside. The boys were always trying to coax us girls to learn to milk the cows, but we were discreet enough to refuse to add that ability to our accomplishments. We felt quite assured that if we did learn, the boys would too many times find it inconvenient to be present at milking time. So the boys looked after the stock, as long as we had it, milked the cows, mowed the lawn, took care of the garden (in a way), drove the cows to and from the pasture, built the fires, pumped the water (usually), beat and laid the carpets, helped scrub the big porch, and at intervals did the necessary painting. The girls did the routine work inside.

Mother liked to have us happy about our work. While most people were predicting a "bad end" for girls that whistled, Mother said, "Girls that whistle and hens that crow will make their way wherever they go," or, "A whistling girl and a jumping sheep is the best property a farmer can keep." Whether we really enjoyed our work or not, we willingly availed ourselves of the opportunity to make that extra amount of uncensored noise. In fact, I think we may have tried to show by the shrillness of our whistling and the loudness of our singing, that we would go a very long way, and that we were property of exceptional value. Sometimes even Mother begged for mercy, since all these expressions of exuberance must always be multiplied by six or eight. It is safe to say that if given her choice as to the way in which we should express our great joy in our work, she would have chosen humming.

Even with all cooperating, it required a long day's work by the "chief cook and bottle washer" to do the essential work in our household. An eight hour day would scarcely have seen us through the half of it. After Mother's illness we had a hired girl for a while, but somehow we never liked it so well that way as when we were doing the work ourselves: so it came about that first one and then the other of us girls took charge. Being out of school and staying at home when Mother was taken sick, I naturally took my turn first. I tried to go at it very systematically, planning so that the youngsters still in school could be of maximum assistance.

This is a sample of my day's activities. I think it is a little different from the day of other housekeepers of the times. I sprang bolt upright when the alarm clock went off at six, sometimes with such speed and sudden awakening from a sound sleep that it made me dizzy, and I had to sit on the edge of the bed for a few minutes until my semi-circular canals had opportunity to adjust themselves to my vertical position. I dressed, went down stairs, and tidied up the dining room, then I called the family and prepared breakfast while they were dressing. After breakfast, it usually fell to Leo and Lois to wash the dishes and clear up the kitchen. I proceeded with the daily sweeping, dusting, bed making, and general picking up of debris from the other ten rooms. Most of the beds, if they were not too badly torn up, I could simply spread up and put the pillow shams over the pillows. Unfortunately, for a number of years, in the winter time, one or two of the beds were equipped with feather beds. On rare occasions, if I were in very much haste, I could spread those up too. But they never looked right. They never had that high puffy appearance that Mother liked to see in her feather beds. In order to look right, if a bed could boast of a feather bed, one had to remove all the bedding, shake the feathers all into one side of the tick, turn the feather bed over, shake the feathers to the other side of the tick, and then smooth and pat the bed down until it was smooth as a mattress before spreading the bedding to place again.

The house in order for the day, I completed plans for dinner and ordered groceries if they were needed. They usually were. Then I combed and braided Leo's pretty red hair. By the time Leo was combed it was eight o'clock or later, high time for me to proceed with the main business of the day, be it washing, ironing, cleaning or baking. I worked hell hell at this, trying to finish up by

eleven o'clock, as that was the time I had to stop and prepare dinner. Dinner must be ready when the hungry horde arrived from school and from work, so that Lois and Leo could do the dishes before they returned to school. While the girls were doing this, I finished whatever had not been done, dressed for the afternoon and was ready to sew. No self-respecting housekeeper of that day planned to do heavy work in the afternoon.

Sewing continued the rest of the afternoon and until I was called to supper, which it was Leo's task to prepare. She and Lois washed the dishes afterward while I finished a few stitches here and there and prepared for whatever social or community activities I had planned. It made my father unhappy if his women folk did housework in the evening, so we rarely planned to do it. He didn't even like to have Mother darn stockings. For him to work was all right, but when he did, he wanted Mother tagging at his heels.

CHAPTER XVI

Play Time Sans Autos and Radio

The adults of that time spent little time bothering their heads to see that we had provisions for entertainment. They agreed that all work and no play made Jack a dull boy, but it was taken for granted that we would have plenty of fun on our own. In fact, those who had our good at heart felt more inclined to restrict our enthusiasm with respect to our amusements rather than to further it. Children should be trained not to waste too much time in "playing around." But the urge for play is so instinctive and irresistible that we managed to have a good time in spite of restrictive handicaps. It may be difficult for the average child of today to understand how having good times was possible for us since we lacked movies and radios, and television, and cars. In my secret heart I think we may have had even better times than present day children, for a greater part of our recreation was achieved through contriving and doing rather than through paying and watching or listening.

It was most difficult to get all of our social affairs attended to. In the first place we had many home responsibilities. Then we felt ourselves personally responsible for the smooth and efficient functioning of the church. For our pure recreational activities we must thus find time outside of activities devoted to home, school or church.

In those days, if we wanted to travel faster or farther than "shanks horses" would carry us, we could ride our bicycles, or ride old Babe, or hitch Babe up to the top buggy and drive at an average rate of perhaps four miles an hour for a reasonable distance. If a young man, who had no transportation of his own, wished to give his girl a treat, there were livery stables where he could hire a "rig" for a consideration. A girl felt quite set up if she could rate such an excessive favor from her "fellow."

Of course, when we drove we always had to keep in mind that Babe, or any other horse, would get hot and tired, thirsty and hungry, and that at intervals she must have opportunity for rest and water and food.

Thirty miles a day was considered a fair day's travel for a horse. That meant that if we took the day for it, we could take a trip that would carry us all of fifteen miles away from home. Of course, we had first to secure Father's and Mother's permission to go so far. At rare intervals, and under particularly favorable circumstances and conditions, permission was somewhat grudgingly granted. The first consideration, in case we drove Babe, was, "Do Father and Mother want to use the horse and buggy themselves?" Some of the other considerations were, "Who is going along?" and, "Will you be back before dark?"

There were advantages of driving horses in those days, over car driving as of today. Traffic was not congested. One could pretty much relieve his mind of the fear that he would collide with another vehicle. Then the motive power itself had sense, the horse variety. A horse would usually stop on his own accord if he came across an obstacle or person in the road, or turn aside

rather than run head-on into another vehicle. I don't remember that I ever heard of a horse-drawn vehicle side swiping another one on the road. This all meant, according to some, that unless the horse were particularly spirited, one could "give him his head," allow the lines to fall loosely, drive along in a leisurely fashion, and the driver could follow his own pursuits. He could enter into conversation, observe the scenery without having to keep watch to see that he was keeping his vehicle on the road. He could, without apprehension, feast his eyes for long intervals on the girl at his side, or at times go fast asleep without too much risk that he would find himself and his equipage in the ditch or in someone's corn field. There were no red lights or stop signs to challenge his progress, and if the horse were homeward bound, he could make the proper turns on his own and finally the driver would awaken to find himself safe in his own barn yard.

My father had a great deal of respect for what he called "Horse sense." He was always telling of this person or that one who didn't have horse sense. I wondered whether or not I had that desirable asset.

Father told us of one time when he was plowing a field of corn and the horses suddenly stopped dead still. Father clicked his tongue, told the team in rather impatient tones to "Get up, ""Get up," but they refused to move. Father went around to their heads to see what was the matter, and there was Clarence fast asleep in the furrow. Father's heart popped into his mouth. His face blanched. He patted the horses gently on the nose, picked up the sleeping boy in his arms and carried him to the house. He laid him in Mother's arms.

"Ma," he said huskily, "we owe it to the good sense of Lize and Nell that Clarence was not trampled to death."

Wiping the cold perspiration from his face, he told her the story of what had happened. When Mother could speak, she put her hand on Father's arm and said, "But Pa, I'll always remember Clarence is here because of your good sense. Lots of men I know would have whipped his horses and forced them to go ahead."

That evening Mother went to the barn with Father. Out of the corner of his eye, as he was working, he saw her putting her arms around the necks of Lize and Nell in turn, and holding her cheek hard and tight against theirs. Father saw her measure out an extra portion of oats for each of them, then with a quick dab to her eyes with her apron, she was off to the house.

Father would never permit his horses to be abused. He would not keep a hired hand who did not know how to treat horses, and he insisted that his boys learn to treat them humanely. At one time Dick " jerked" old Puss when he wa's driving her. He didn't know Father was watching. Dick had had previous warnings, but he failed to realize fully that "A word to the wise is sufficient." Father caught up with him in the woodshed where Dick, quite unaware of what was in store for him, stood cracking nuts. I think Father used a shingle that time.

But Father was not inclined to trust horse sense too far, and he believed that, in an emergency, the human variety of intelligence was superior to horse sense, if the human individual were willing to exert himself to use what he had. It was Father's idea that, even with a mild-mannered horse, one should always keep a tight rein and be ready for any emergency. He didn't approve of the leisurely type of driving I have suggested above.

He said, "When a horse gets scared, his sense deserts him." And it did.

Runaways were terrible and dangerous occurrences. When terrified enough to start to run, even man's strength was often inadequate to control a horse. At top speed he would frantically crash through barbed wire fences, across ditches, into sides of bridges--any place to escape somehow from the danger he felt had threatened him. He acted much like a car "out of control" and those in the buggy were in real danger, for the buggy would often tip over, spilling the occupants along the road. The driver, entangled in the lines, might be dragged to his death. Father never like to have his women folk drive a horse.

He approved of bicycles. Everyone was getting one of these about the time I was ten. The thing that appealed to Father about this type of conveyance, I think, was that we still had to work in order to get any place. The first bicycles that came out had a large wheel in front and a small one in the rear, with the seat for the driver perched high on the front wheel. These were not too satisfactory. It took a real acrobat to mount and dismount, and a courageous person to pedal along perched so far above the ground. This type soon gave way to a machine with uniform, medium-sized wheels. My brothers sold papers and managed to buy one of the latter type, but I couldn't sell papers. Anyway, I was still too small to think of my possessing such a desirable asset. What was my amazement, then, one day to see Father coming home wheeling a small sized bike!

"Come here, Grace," he said, trying to be casual, "I want to see how this fits you."

It was just right. Father stood by with beaming face while the boys gave me my first lesson in riding. It took days before I could fully realize the shining little equipage was mine.

But conservative skeptics viewed the bicycle with alarm. They somehow thought it indecent for people to go "scorching" through the country at such speeds. Man was made to walk and not to pedal. Even some of the doctors were alarmed for fear this "unnatural" means of locomotion might have deleterious effects on the physical well-being of those who indulged in it, especially those who "scorched." Recently while perusing a newspaper article of June, 1896, I found "A Warning for Scorchers." It said there were indications that bicyclists were developing a "vibratory habit, a restlessness and craving for action which doctors say is a form of intoxication. The rider becomes drunk with motion."

At the turn of the century, since there were no radios, no phonographs, no juke boxes, to please or offend, necessity forced us to satisfy our urge for musical expression by our own efforts.

Practically every household possessed either a piano or an organ, an ever present invitation for us to gather around and sing. When other amusements palled on us, we could always, wherever we were, depend on a sing fest to carry us through the evening. Such an evening left us glowing and well pleased with ourselves.

We sang all our favorite songs from the hymn book. With much gusto we sang patriotic songs. We sang semi-classic songs, such as "The Last Rose of Summer," "Annie Laurie," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Love's Old Sweet Song," "Ben Bolt," "Silver Threads Among the Gold." We sang, "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now," "Two Little Girls in Blue," "A Bicycle Built for Two," "The Bowery," "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree," "Under the Bamboo Tree," "Ta Ra Ra Ra Boom De-A," "When You Were a Tulip and I Wore a Big Red Rose." It is amazing to recollect the wealth of popular songs which spread over the country in those days without the assistance of radio or movies. We all somehow seemed to know these songs as they came out. We spent a considerable portion of our extra pennies for sheet music, which ultimately filled the new piano bench to overflowing, the excess spilling onto the near by shelves.

Whoever wrote these songs must have fared quite well without a Petrillo. But as for us, we didn't seem to care who wrote the songs or how they fared. We just played and sang them without bothering our heads as to the composers.

At our house it wasn't necessary to wait for musical enthusiasts to arrive from the outside. So far as numbers were concerned, we had a first class chorus of our own. Except when Ben or Jessie or Docie happened to be present, we lacked soprano, but in spite of the fact that members of the family had no hesitation in informing me that my soprano voice was atrocious, even worse than my alto, in time of need I sacrificed myself to the cause and furnished the essential treble. With Leo on the alto, Jess and Milo on the bass, Dick and Artie supporting the tenor section, we rendered numbers pleasing to ourselves and good enough to call forth much favorable and gratifying comment from Father and Mother. Fortunately, our nearest neighbors must have felt cause for continuous congratulations on this distance score.

It was not alone that we were fond of singing; there were usually several of us taking music lessons on the organ or piano. Our stint of practice was set at an hour a day. I can see how an hour's practice a day by one child might have been heroically endured in the name of furthering education, but to have had the ordeal of listening several hours daily to halting and faulty rendition of scales and arpeggios must have been well nigh intolerable to those who must abide in the same or neighboring houses. Yet Mother always said she loved to hear us practice. Father paid no attention, and as to the neighbors, there was the subduing effect of those two hundred feet. Besides, if you ask me, neighbors should have all been glad that none of us took lessons on the clarinet or saxophone.

Three times a day the piano could always be certain of its popularity. That was immediately following each meal. Practice on the piano was an arduous task, but at those three times we loved it. In comparison with clearing away the tables or washing and wiping those stacks of dishes, those piles of pots and pans, practicing was a delightful occupation. We soon found that once seated at the piano, we would not be called away for other work, so at times there was a mild, or maybe wild, stampede to see who could gain possession of the piano stool first. Once there, we as a rule, exercised squatter's rights but at times Mother had to arbitrate, even dictate. I may say, to make sure that the more deliberate ones or the younger ones got their proper and respective turns at the temporarily popular activity. Once we established our rights, the other zealous aspirants withdrew, but woe to the successful contender who strayed from legitimate practice! If Mother heard him making up his own tunes or playing the ever popular refrain, "Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater," he must evacuate in favor of some one else who would keep more assiduously to his assigned lessons. Sometimes I thought my own tunes were so lovely that Mother would never know the difference, but her ears seemed to be especially attuned to lesson tunes. She always knew.

At times we were able to persuade my father to sing. As a young man he had collected a repertoire of songs of a type totally unfamiliar to us, sometimes humorous, but more often melo-dramatic ballads, stories of unrequited love, morbid stories of death and despair. I remember one about a girl who refused to wear the proper amount of clothing to a dance. She became colder and colder as she and her escort drove in a sleigh through the frigid wintry air. I recollect one strain toward the end which said, "I'm growing warmer now." Apparently, at that stage her feelings were becoming numb. At any rate, when the young couple arrived at their destination, the young swain turned to help her from the sleigh and found she had frozen to death. We had Father sing that one again and again.

Another of Father's songs was a hunting song. Arle says it went like this:

'Twas early one Monday morning,
All in the month of June;
The June Bugs were a humming and
The humming birds were so gay, and
Sing tithery athery athery aye,
Sing tithery athery aye.

I took my gun upon my shoulder,
A hunting I did go;
I saw the track of a big fat buck,
I tracked him through the snow, and
Sing tithery athery athery aye,
Sing tithery athery aye.

I tracked him o'er the hill, my boy,
And to the water's edge;
And there we drove right in,
And off the continent I shelf, and
Sing tithery athery athery aye,
Sing tithery athery aye.

When I was under water,
The hand of death on me,
I paid off my mortal sin.

Like cannons they did roar, and
Sing tithery athery athery aye,
Sing tithery athery aye.

When I was under water,
No bottom to be found,
I jumped upon a big fat buck
And pinned him to the ground, and
Sing tithery athery athery aye,
Sing tithery athery aye.

Out of five hundred big fat buck
I got ten thousand doe,
And taking up my pistols
I kiled them with one blow, and
Sing tithery athery athery aye,
Sing tithery athery aye.

I took the hides from all these doe
And took them to the store,
And there I got so much money for them
I coundn't get in the barn door, and
Sing tithery athery athery aye,
Sing tithery athery aye.

Now I'm the man that wrote this song;
My name is Bingo Bung;
If you can tell a bigger lie,
I'm sure you ought to be hung, and
Sing tithery athery athery aye,
Sing tithery athery aye.

We thought my father had a good voice for such songs, but the characteristic that impressed us most in his singing was a peculiar little catch that occurred at intervals, much like the initial tone in a yodel. We practiced and tried to accomplish this ourselves, and were green with envy when Jess succeeded to a slight degree.

In his youth Father had attended the old fashioned singing school such as was prevalent in the early day. He was fortunate enough to be possessed of a photographic memory. My mother said he could at that time hear a song once and reproduce it, so he could without difficulty regale us and our friends for whole evenings with his songs and ballads. We loved to get him started, and would bombard him with requests for more until he would say decisively, "No more tonight. I'm tired."

Sometimes our friends would serenade us. My favorite serenader was a friend who played the flute. On Sunday afternoons when those high tones were wafted to my ears as the flutist made his way up the hill, I felt that all was right with the world. He came in and played while I did my best at an accompaniment on the piano. We played on and on, attempting all the numbers we liked in the big green music book the Laffins had presented to me. We played hymns and sheet music. Time flew past and we were surprised to find it was six o'clock, that we were hungry and deliciously tired. We laid aside our music, took a few stretching and bending exercises to get the "crooks" out of our backs and necks, and repaired to the kitchen to partake of the Tripp's variety of Sunday night supper. We raided the ice box and procured a large pitcher of milk and a platter of meat sliced from the roasts left over from dinner. We cut ourselves slices of bread from Mother's nice loaves freshly baked on Saturday. We helped ourselves to a generous portion of butter from the ten pound roll. We dipped up a dish of plum jam from the three gallon stone jar. We spread the rounds on the kitchen table and ate.

We were always cold when our friends came, we could arrive in the entire stage when others of the family were not around. It was colder that way.

But all of this was too good to last. Unfortunately, my blitzy friend got a position on a newspaper in Sioux Falls and went away. The night before he left, he surprised me with a present, a framed pastel picture he had made in the dark rich tones he liked. He stayed late and on the back of the picture registered his intentions of leaving, - "11.15, Going," "11.30, Going," "11.45, Going," "12.00, Gone." We corresponded for a while, but letters became spaced farther and farther apart and at last no more were written. I liked my picture with the inscriptions on the back, but I missed the flute.

Serenading was supposed to make people happy. A charivari (shivoree) was presumed to make them miserable. It was reserved for people who had just been married. I remember the first one I attended. Word was passed at school that one of our teachers had been married that day.

"Meet at seven at the corner of the school," we were told. "We are going to have a 'shivoree.' Bring whistles and tin cans, pans and bells, anything you can find to make a noise."

There must have been fifty of us who collected at the assigned corner. Dick gave us the instructions.

"We'll sneak up to the house," he said. "Nobody must say a word or make any noise until I give the signal. I'll give two short whistles." We started out according to instructions, but when half way there Leo and Stella, who didn't belong but had begged to come along, began to giggle. Dick was furious. He stopped the crowd.

"You kids either stop that giggling or stay right where you are," he said.

He waited. Every time they looked at each other they would begin again. We were quite disgusted. They were too little to come along anyway. At last Dick managed to subdue them. We crept silently along in the darkness, surrounded the house and waited. At last we heard two short whistles and pandemonium broke loose. There is no noise like a "shivoree." We kept on until the couple, in self defense, appeared at the door and invited us in. We sat on the floor and made them play and sing for us, then departed, happy in the thought that we had made their first evening thoroughly unhappy.

CHAPTER XVII

We Live Victorious

One way that money seemed to be spent quite generously at our house was in the purchase of games for the home. I can now see the cunning strategy in that. My parents wanted to keep us at home, though why any intelligent brace of parents should throw out bait to keep eight wild youngsters whooping it up around the house is still a mystery to me. Anyhow, the scheme worked. At various times we quarreled and howled over ping pong, checkers, dominoes, croquet, checkers, authors, and rock.

The plan to keep us at home not only succeeded in that purpose, but it brought half the young set of the community in to contribute to the uproar. It is amazing to me, as I think of it now, that Mother and Father never seemed to mind that at all. I never remember having either of them object to the company we would in, however much it contributed to the disruption of the quiet and peaceful order of the household. Parents' nerves in that day, must have been of tough fibre.

The carrom board was popular. It was sort of a miniature form of billiards using wooden, doughnut-shaped counters instead of balls. These were forcibly propelled by a flip of the finger instead of with cues. One could, with practice, become quite adept in driving his opponent's counters into illogical positions and in driving his own men into the wedged pockets at the corners of the board. A carrom game with played cards was "Old Maid." It was an old name or so that I think. The cards could be miscarded except one lone queen left in the hand, or one of the players, and we could name "Old Maid! Old Maid!" I always knew you

would be an old maid. How does it feel to be an old maid?" If the unfortunate person happened to be a boy, all the better. He was still an old maid, a counterpart, I suppose, of the "sissy" in modern parlance.

In those days girls who did not marry became objects, first of pity and sympathetic concern, later objects of ridicule and contempt. These ill-fated beings usually lived around with any relative who could be persuaded to take them in, wore cork-screw curls and severe out of date clothes, developed harsh high-pitched voices and irritable dispositions. Not succeeding in getting a husband was the last word that could be written in human failure. Without a husband one's life was completely ruined. So the game of "Old Maid" had particular significance at that time.

Card playing was a favorite amusement in our home. I cannot remember when we children did not have our cast off deck of cards to play with. Father loved to play. The games most popular at the time for adults were "Five Hundred," "Bridge Whist," "High Five" and "Seven Up." Later when Father's eyesight failed and he was unable to do much else, he spent hours in playing the game of "Solitaire." Mother sat close by kibitzing.

She would say, "There's a play you missed, Pa," or, "That red queen will play on that black king."

If we didn't feel inclined to indulge in games or music, we could crack nuts, or pop corn, or pull taffy. For the latter, we boiled down sorghum molasses with a pinch of soda added. At the proper stage as indicated by testing a small portion in cold water, the taffy was poured out into plates to cool. Cooled sufficiently, each of us took a proper share, repeatedly pulled and doubled the rope-like mass back until the taffy became a light yellow in color, and until the crowd declared it sufficiently manipulated to arrange on plates for further cooling. If properly done, the taffy would in the end break easily into small pieces and be just the right consistency to provide us with a chewy treat. Minus a rumpus room, I do not recommend this amusement for modern houses. The polished floors and Persian rugs would suffer.

In the summer time when it was pleasant out doors, we spent a considerable amount of our recreational time playing croquet. We became so fascinated with the game that we would play as long as we could see, and longer. We tied white strips of cloth on the arches so that we could locate them in the semi-darkness. If a rain came up, and we could manage to evade Mother's watchful eye, we would play until we were drenched.

All these things compensated in some small degree for the fact that we were not permitted to "run the streets" or "meet the trains." Another big compensation was the fact that we could at times go to Anzev's for an hour or two after school. She and her brother John lived in the country about six miles from town, much too far in that day to commute daily, so to give the two youngsters an opportunity to attend high school, their parents had installed them in a small apartment in town. On weekends these two returned to the country and while there, their larder was generously replenished with all the good things to eat one finds on a farm. Sunday evenings they came back to town loaded down with fried chickens, cottage cheese, baked beans, chocolate cakes, nut cookies, home made hominy, and freshly butchered tenderloins. Monday evenings were popular at Anzev's. We gorged ourselves on all the goodies. When we left I fear the larder was sadly depleted. Anzev and John had to live like ordinary folks the rest of the week, buy most of their provision at the store, and when at the apartment, the latter part of the week, we had to amuse ourselves and get rid of our hunger by toasting marshmallows over her kerosene lamp. There was always a tidy ring of burnt marshmallows around the top of Anzev's lamp chimney.

We had no twinges of conscience then, but it bothers me now to think we were so greedy and inconsiderate as to eat up their food fast. The only mitigation I have is the fact that we made up to some extent at least by visiting Mr. and Mrs. Johnson's house a great deal. I can say that when we told Mr. and Mrs. Johnson of the weekly raids on Anzev's apartment, they received very kindly and said that, though, those young girls of others had done the same, it was quite excusable.

Sometimes we spent weekends with Anzey and John at the farm. These were high spots in our lives. Father and Mother Schaeffer were as much fun as the "kids" and turned the place over to us. Young folks came and went continually. We planned and gave large parties. We ate nuts, popped corn, pulled taffy. We explored and ransacked the farm in general.

A popular game for a time at our parties was "Post Office." It was far from a popular game with the father and mother crowd, after they found out that when a girl was called to the dimly lighted "post office," the letter delivered to her in private by the "postmaster" was a kiss. Father said he didn't consider that a very nice game. "I cannot see," he said, "why you girls think it is any fun to make yourselves so common." When his disapprobation was put in that way, our faces turned red. It did seem a rather cheap type of amusement.

We had our hobbies in which we engaged. At one time someone gave me a wood burning outfit for Christmas. Burning wood became a fascinating pastime. The set resembled an atomizer. It consisted of a small glass bottle for holding benzines, a tube that led from this to a pointed steel device, to which the fluid was pumped by means of a rubber bulb. One pumped with one hand while he manipulated the red hot steel point with the other. A finish of shellac completed the decorations. Those who were smitten with the burning craze made picture frames, wall plaques, and different purpose boxes. Docia and Vera and I sat and burned wood by the hour. All of my relatives and friends received one of these works of art which I made, for Christmas the next year. I am sad to relate that I see no sign of any of these articles in the homes of these people so favored, today.

Then there was the time when everyone developed films and printed kodak pictures. We prepared a dark room and for a spell spent all our leisure time preparing chemicals, immersing films, exposing and printing pictures. It was so exciting to see the trees and houses and friends' faces gradually take form on the white paper.

There was the stamp picture craze. We secured these at the photographers. Though each of the twenty-five pictures was a different pose, we secured the whole sheet for twenty-five cents. Posing for these, waiting impatiently for the developing and printing, squealing over the resultant products, and exchanging with friends, furnished many an exciting hour.

In the summer, groups of us planned hay rides, in the winter bob sled rides. The coasting, hay rides and bob sled rides involved some danger, but were comparatively safe in those days. It was before the days when fast moving automobiles usurped the highways, and disputed the rights of passage of sleds, pedestrians, chickens and cows. The drivers of horse drawn vehicles good naturedly granted the sledgers the right-of-way and saw to it that none of us was injured. Even so, Mother often shook her head in anxiety and fear and said she supposed that those who lived would live victorious."

We climbed trees and came down with the broken branches when we got ourselves literally "too far out on a limb." We dug caves in the sand bank near our house and crawled into them, until the day when the Wilder boy and the O'Brien boy were buried in one of their caves. The Wilder Boy did not come out alive. We were so sad and so scared that we felt no regret when, after that, cave digging was placed on the black list for us.

Our favorite Sunday afternoon entertainment was more too safe either. In the summer time the young set of the town was wont to turn out en masse for a walk "up the tracks." A mile east of town, situated in a high bluff in a wooded section, was the "Old Mineral Spring," so named as its structure could bring over a hundred rooms, elegantly appointed parlors and broad verandas. It looked out to the north over the valley of the "classic Skunk." For a time cable cars negotiated the steep ascent from the Rock Island tracks at the foot of the bluffs to the hotel above. For some years the place was considered of sufficient importance to have a post office. Recently it closed for the last of the visitors for the year. The post office and hotel, the remains of the old, but a great part of the early

the time that we were growing up "Old Mineral Springs" was a ghost hotel, unkempt and falling apart, the remains of some one's dream of a luxurious resort where vacationers and health seekers would come for rest, recuperation and recreation. We somehow never tired of walking through its luxurious halls and parlors of the hotel, of viewing the scene to the north from its broad porches, of clambering over the steep tracks, of poking around its spacious grounds, of exploring the State Epworth League Grounds to the west, or continuing through the woods to the east to view again the steep ravine we called "Lover's Leap." It pleased us to pause here, sit on the edge of the precipice and muse romantically over the sad fate of Fawn Eyes, the Indian maid, whose pale faced lover had been hurled to the bottom of the precipitous height by Tall Oaks, the Indian brave, who also loved Fawn Eyes. We thought it romantically fitting that she should join her lover by leaping after him to her own death.

In the early spring our track walking goal was the gathering of wild flowers. There was a friendly rivalry as to who could bring to school the first bouquets of violets, of spring beauties, of Dutchman's breeches, of butter-cups. We sat in the woods and tested our friends to see if they liked butter, by holding a buttercup under their chins. If one could detect a yellow reflection on the skin, the test was positive. We named daisies and plucked the petals to discover whether or not we were beloved by our various friends.

If in those days, trains traversed the Rock Island tracks on Sunday afternoons, the engineers must have suffered a good many heart failures as group after group of young people scurried to right and left in the effort to clear the tracks as the trains came past. We did not care to dispute the locomotive's right-of-way, but we were not discreetly willing to grant them exclusive right-of-way, when doing so interfered with our Sunday afternoon adventures. But here Providence and the engineers obligingly looked out for us. At least, according to Mother, we "lived victorious."

CHAPTER XVIII

Feudin' an' Fussin'

Not the least of our pleasures while growing up was obtained by making others in our family unhappy. There was no place for the thin-skinned individual in our household. If one found himself equipped by nature with such a covering, it was well for him to proceed immediately to the task of toughening and thickening it up, if he wished to survive and come out a normal individual, for the thin skin was sure to be bombarded a-plenty with missiles presumed to cut through and hurt.

Teasing and "goat-getting" were among our favorite amusements. I discovered that early in my career. When I was about five, Eleanor and Em took me out with them to the wood lot. As we approached this woodsy spot, they informed me in serious tones that it was time I should know that Mother was not really my mother. When they arrived at the wood lot, they would show me where my real mother lived. They led me to a depression filled with weeds and moss and grass and rubbish and told me that I should stand there and wait for my real mother to get me. They walked away and watched my reactions from a safe distance where I could not see them.

You can imagine how petrified with fear a child would be at that age under those circumstances. I did not make a move to follow them. If their object was to invoke a frantic and despairing outcry, they were not disappointed. In fact, my terror was so evident and so extreme that they returned immediately with frightened faces and rescued me from the impending disaster.

The girls soothed and comforted me, and so far as I can remember, never tried such an experiment again. It is my belief that the two got more than they bargained for that time. As a rule, both of them were my champions and protectors.

It was lucky for them that I did not tell Mother about the incident. When I returned to the house, my tears were dried and my eyes were shining with excitement over the poem about the "little girl who had a little curl right in the middle

of her forehead." Eleanor had been reciting it to me as we walked along. So far as I know, the incident left no Freudian effects to retard my future emotional development.

At times as I grew older, I suffered at the hands of the boys. At one time when I was ten or twelve years old, the hungry horde arrived home from school to find Mother had been detained at a church meeting. There were no signs of preparation for supper. The boys decided that I should get supper for them. Whether they rubbed me the wrong way by the manner in which they asked me, or whether I was even at that tender age developing convictions as to women's rights, I do not know. I refused to comply. They tried to force me, and I fought back. Finally they decided I was in no mood to give in. They put me out of doors and locked the doors.

I wandered around getting hungrier and hungrier minute by minute. I could just imagine the family around the table eating "good old raw fried potatoes," boiled eggs and fresh crisp radishes from the garden. I began to realize what it meant to cut off one's nose to spite his face. I should have realized in the first place that this was a man's world and that even though I did feel it was no more my responsibility to get supper than it was the boys', there are times when it pays to smile and comply. By biding one's time perhaps one's ends could be attained in subtler ways than open rebellion.

I was just sitting on a bench under a window meditating in a childish way on this philosophical discovery when I heard a low whisper above me. It was Leo attempting a little smuggling in my behalf. But alas! The transfer was intercepted. The boys were on the alert. The food was returned to the table, and Leo was promptly expelled, and joined me in the out door vigil. That was better. At least misery had company.

We had finally to arbitrate a settlement of the difficulty. Leo and I agreed to wash the dishes in return for permission to re-enter and eat. Both sides in the fracas saved face in that way. Leo and I told ourselves that we had planned to wash the dishes anyway.

After I took charge of the household, I always felt it necessary to keep my ear "cocked" to make sure of what was transpiring in the kitchen during the dish washing ordeal. Leo washed; Lois wiped. Nothing pleased Lois more than to discover some utensil that was not well washed. She promptly returned it to the dish pan, though she knew full well what would happen if she did. Leo would grasp the tea kettle and start after her, threatening to scald her with the contents. Panic stricken, off Lois would go up the back stairs and down the front with Leo hot on the trail, pretending her intentions of revenge by scalding.

By the time they had made a couple of circuits, I was usually on deck to settle the disturbance. Nevertheless, Lois was undaunted. She did not hesitate to "discipline" Leo again and again with regard to her ineffective dish washing, and Leo continued by use of the tea kettle threat to dispute her right to do so.

Father and Mother did not usually take our quarrels too seriously. Now and then Mother would say, "Girls, don't fuss. Some day you'll be sorry." But on the whole, I think they considered our foolish practice in this respect just part of the growing up process. Perhaps they had surmised by experience, without being told about it in school, that in some degree each child recapitulates the history of the race in his individual development. They may have thought teasing and quarreling represented a primitive stage in such development.

Unfortunately for us, at times, if we tried the folks too far, the resultant irritation over-rode their fine philosophy. At one time I was doing my Saturday chores, the weekly house cleaning. My dust cap was not at hand, so I borrowed Leo's new one without going to the trouble of asking her permission. That was a bad mistake on my part. When Leo saw her precious new dust cap participating in such menial tasks, there was a terrific outcry, which developed into one of our good old fashioned, violent, and I suppose, boisterous quarrels.

Father heard the disturbance from the yard where he happened to be working, and was more than a little displeased. As for me, I think that he should have been running true to form, attending so closely to the job at hand that he was completely oblivious to the battle being waged indoors. Maybe he was suffering from a little touch of indigestion.

Anyhow, Father soon appeared at the door and we were requested in no uncertain terms to accompany him to the basement (our establishment at that time lacking a wood shed.) Here he very quickly subdued us with a type of punishment popular at that time--a laying on of hands.

It didn't take long, for both of us had learned, through observation, that it paid to begin crying even before we were touched. Then we wouldn't be "touched" so many times. After he had finished, I didn't care whether I had the dust cap or not, and Leo didn't either.

The "whipping" was unexpected. It wasn't Father's usual way of disciplining us. A word from him was generally adequate. We used to say, "A word to the wise is sufficient."

That episode didn't establish permanent peace between Leo and me, but from then on we managed to wage our battles more discreetly, however, there were so many things to settle.

There was the question of boundaries. We slept together, and Leo was always invading my territory. If she refused to move over when I asked her to, insisting in essence that she must have "Lebensraum" and that after all she was occupying no more space than was rightfully coming to her, I had to get up and angrily draw an imaginary line beginning at a certain curly-kew on the head of the bed and extending down the middle of the sheets to the point where she was protruding over the boundary. It was only after some heated discussion and repeated measurements that we could agree enough to settle back into our respective territories.

We had similar difficulties with regard to our images in the mirror. If we happened to be using the mirror at the same time, Leo was always accusing me of appropriating some of her space. The problem of settlement was even more difficult here, since even after we had drawn the imaginary line down the middle, we could never agree as to whether or not our respective images were or were not overlapping the other's holdings. It seemed to me I had to stand so that half my face was blocked out by the side of the mirror before Leo was willing to agree that she had her proper share.

When later I studied physics, I found that in this mirror case, the problem was all complicated by illusions arising from principles involving the angles of incidence and reflection--that where she thought I was, I wasn't, and where I thought she wasn't, she was.

With regard to our rights in the closet, we were frequently coming to a crisis. We were constantly becoming confused as to the exact hook which divided our belongings, and we often found it necessary to begin at either end and count loudly until we reached an amicable agreement.

I got even with Leo once for being so "cartankerous." We were moving into a different room. I decided I would like to have my clothes in the front of the closet, so that they would be more convenient. But I knew if I wanted the front end, Leo would too, so I went to all the trouble of arranging my belongings in the back, informing Leo when she put in an appearance, that I proposed to have my clothes in the back of the closet this time, out of the dust.

Leo was furious. She guessed not. The back of the closet was just where her clothes were going to be. I quarreled with her for what I thought was a sufficient and convincing length of time, then I passed my clothes over the end,

"All right, baby. Have your own way."

Peace reigned. She was happy and I was elated and flushed with victory. Leo did not know of the splendid strategy I used until years later. By that time she could see the episode as a first class political maneuver.

Skirmishes of this sort were fairly common, but we did continue to be discreet as to the time and manner in which they were conducted. Father had good reason to conclude that his disciplinary measures at the time of the dust cap incident had been highly effective, and perhaps he did accomplish his purpose. At least we no longer quarreled so loudly that we disgraced him in the eyes of the neighbors. We indulged ourselves behind closed doors as it were, in subdued tones designed not to carry to the world. Our quarrels were just as bitter, but not so widely broadcast.

As soon as we discovered that any member of the family was sensitive to a certain situation, we eagerly pounced upon that as grist for our "goat-getting" mill.

Arle and I had some delightful times trying to convince Leo that she was crazy. Our fun started in a conversation one day when Arle did not agree with Leo and said scornfully, "Why, you are crazy."

Leo answered back heatedly. We could see that she was disturbed with the accusation, so that was our chance to move in. We lowered our voices and told her in a kindly, confidential manner that we hated to be the ones to tell her, but we felt that she should know that she wasn't just right in her mind.

"I am too," she countered angrily, but she looked a little troubled.

"No," said Arle, "You're not. People never know when they are insane. Crazy people always think they are all right."

Leo began to cry, which was just what we wanted. Mercilessly we told her there was no point in crying, it wouldn't change the situation, and besides, so far as we could see, crazy people were just as happy as anyone else. She cried some more. Once when Mother appeared on the scene at this stage, she made us stop. She said, in her most emphatic tone, "That is one type of thing I will just not put up with." She didn't see the joke.

Arle was "squeamish." The sight of a dead hen in the alley one day made him ill. From then on Leo had a defensive weapon to use when he started on the crazy stunt. All she had to do was to crook her finger at him and shout, "Old dead hen! Old dead hen!" He would be overcome with his original nausea.

He soon revived sufficiently to call Leo "Crooked." At one time in telling of a certain incident, she had gotten the details all mixed up. She became furious when we called her "Crooked," so calling her that became a good "goat-getting" device. Leo, not to be outdone, came back at Arle with "Tangle foot! Tangle foot!" That was to remind him of the time he fell on the tangle foot fly paper and got himself most unpleasantly involved with the sticky paste and the dead flies.

Thus the two sparred back and forth, "Old dead hen," "Crooked," "Tangle foot," "Crazy," "Old dead hen." Finally when Arle discovered he would never get my place that way, he would say, "Crooked, Crazy, ten times more than you can say." But Leo would have the last word. She would slam the door as she dashed from the room, calling out, "Old dead hen, Tanglefoot, ten times more than that." They had gone past the limits of infinity by this time, so there was nothing more to be said.

Well, Arle and Leo were involved the time when I was a small one - a boy about 14 or 15. This boy and a girl - it's very hard to make out old taproot stories and I sat on the porch, and I tell you we were getting along famously, until a bucket of water from the hose was accidentally thrown in our direction. A poor, innocent boy might possibly have stood a little cold water, but everyone knows an incipient shiver could not weather a whole stream of it. Leo and Arle have much to answer for.

It always seemed to me that I got more than my share of teasing. Perhaps I didn't learn to mask my feelings.

My feet were excessively long and narrow and flat, with no instep to speak of, and with a bone slightly prominent on the inner side of the ankle. This troubled me. The boys added to my unhappiness about my feet by making me believe they were really deformed. They did not stop at teasing me themselves, but they enlisted their friends in the campaign to make me miserable.

I remember one time a friend of Arle's pretended he was sympathizing with me. He said, "Grace, I think it is terrible the way the kids are always teasing you about your feet." I beamed upon him "Yes," he said, in serious tones, "I feel it is entirely too big a proposition to make light of."

Once Father and the boys were moving a small cabin. Arle told me afterwards about some of the difficulties they had encountered. "You know, Grace," he said, as I listened with interest, "there was one corner that just wouldn't budge. Pa sent me inside to see what the trouble was, and what do you think I found?"

I began to wrinkle up my forehead trying to think what could have been of sufficient weight to have frustrated all their efforts, but Arle did not give me a chance to answer before he said, "Your shoes, right smack dab in that corner!"

I gave Arle a scornful look and left, covering my ears, and singing at the top of my voice so that I couldn't hear any more. Nevertheless, I did hear him say in a loud voice, "Yes, your shoes. I threw them out of the window, and the house lurched forward so fast I nearly fell down."

My father could appreciate a joke on himself, and did not escape entirely his part in the family teasing. At one time he came home from a convention proudly displaying a gadget he had bought, a device presumed to hold a necktie in its proper place. Mother looked dubious. Father tried diligently to use it, but it never could be made to work.

Mother finally said, "Pa, you should have known that wouldn't do as they said."

"But, you see," said Father, "I had to hurry. I didn't have time to think. There were only a few left."

We were much pleased to have uncovered one case in which Father, usually wary of crafty salesmen, had been taken in. We did not have any intention of permitting him to forget it. At strategic times, if he were in the proper state of mind, we thereafter brought the incident to his embarrassed attention.

And so we quarreled and teased and made the other fellow miserable, for better or for worse, according to the psychologist one is talking to, I suppose. The fact that in our plastic years we were compelled always to be on the defensive, to take a stand and maintain it in the face of all comers even when we discovered we were wrong, may have had a tendency to make us opinionated. As for myself, in spite of much re-reading of the famous chapter in Franklin's autobiography, and my ensuing efforts to establish the habit of saying mildly, "It seems to me," "From my point of view," I found myself still unable thoroughly to achieve my goal of becoming the gracious type of person I admired, rather than the opinionated one I disliked.

CHAPTER NIN

Community Fun

In spite of the fact that our elders apparently made little attempt to see that we young people were entertained, we did find a great deal in the general community life to add to our enjoyment.

Private groups or organizations such as lodges, or committees of school groups, sponsored a few dances during the year, usually the ventriloquist club, the sponsored, either by Father or Mother's "friends" (we were permitted to attend).

"But," my father said, with one of his sharp looks, "don't ask to go to a public dance. I don't ever want to hear of any of my children going to one of those."

The favorite dances of the time were waltzes and two-steps. Now and then the programs were varied by introducing other types of dancing. The "Rye Waltz" was our favorite. When the orchestra struck up "Coming Through the Rye," each of us tried to make sure he was paired with his favorite boy or girl friend. A considerable amount of the dance was straight waltzing, but during certain phases of the song everyone would stand still and "step, step, step," with his right foot. Sometimes we sang with the music.

Now and then for a change we had a polka or a tag waltz or the "Virginia Reel," or the master of ceremonies would call a "circle two-step."

For the circle two-step we were satisfied to be paired with a partner not quite so choice, for we knew that after dancing a few minutes, the master would call the signal to "join hands and circle to the left" and after a while he would call, "Right hand to your partner, grand right and left" and finally, "Everybody two-step." We must then dance with whomever we chanced to have the good or bad fortune to meet in the line.

Sometimes, if one could see someone coming up in the circle that he preferred, he could appear to be slightly engrossed or hard-of-hearing so that the signal failed to register until he had "grand righted and lefted" to the more desirable partner. In the resulting confusion, one or more red-faced individuals were apt to be left standing unattended in the middle of the floor. If some one did not immediately rush to rescue such a one, he had to find his place at the side lines. That was embarrassing, but if it didn't happen too often, we didn't mind. It was part of the game.

The square dance had almost outlived its popularity at this time, or shall I say "It was having a breathing spell" since it is now popular again. Anyway, we thought it fun to indulge in one or two during the evening, especially if we had a clever caller. The square dance was made up of a series of movements including promenading, swinging on the corner, saluting your partner, grand right and left maneuvers. Only the initiated could interpret the signals and execute the steps.

At this time most of us young people knew only the most common, simple calls. We were lost if a caller of the old school happened to be present and in his characteristic, sing-song voice call out something similar to the following:

All eight balance and all eight swing.

A left Allemande

And a right hand grand

Meet your partner and

Promenade eight

Till you come straight

In those days it was poor taste to dance with the same partner throughout the evening. We considered a dance a general social occasion, and, if we laid claim to having "good manners," we felt more or less obligated to take our turns in dancing with those who would step all over our feet, or with those for whom we had no special liking.

So far as fun is concerned, a town is handicapped if it doesn't have a river. We were so fortunate as to have one meandering through the north edge of our town, the "Classie Skunk." I often marveled over the tickle of aesthetic spirit the water示示 exhibited when it ran out of the river. The Indians and most Indians, I believe, filled it the "Chicopee." Chicopee is much more pleasant to the eye than Skunk, though the two are equally clean. Chicopee water is clear to the eye, although it is muddy at times. The Indians, however, means "foul water," and the people of that nation which had the longest tradition for both names, chose either

the growth of wild onions on the banks of the river.

Though in our geographies the river was always called in blunt, unpleasant diction, "The Skunk," it pleased the fancy of us children to refer to it quite often as the "Chicaqua." The word was not alone more euphonious, but it seemed to us to present a most satisfying symbol of the early romantic days when the Fox Indians hunted and fished on the banks of the river.

Skunk River and Winder's Pond furnished opportunity for much wholesome out door sport, places for swimming in summer and for skating in winter. Both sports were popular.

The swimming in the river was the source of much anxiety among the parents, for though, when the water was low, it was quite a harmless and kindly old stream, during times of high water, it became a rampaging demon, covering acres of good farm land, tearing away its mud banks, digging out holes in its channel, developing dangerous whirlpools.

The boys were not always too prudent as to their choice of the best and safest time and place in which to indulge in this favorite sport. It was surprising that there were not more accidents than there were. I remember when twelve year old Willie King was drowned. Dick was with the group at the time of the accident and afterward, when friends and neighbors dragged the river most of the night before the body was recovered. None of us ever forgot the tragic incident and after that, extra restrictions were imposed on swimming in the river.

Warnings were also given out with regard to skating. Youngsters were so impatient to get at it after the long summer suspension, that they were apt to indulge before the ice was strong enough to support them properly. I can't remember that any of the skaters were actually drowned, but a number of times people broke through weak places and got a thorough soaking. It was a gruelling experience to return home wet to the skin, with clothing freezing in the zero weather. However, barring no accidents, it was most exhilarating, of a winter afternoon or evening, to meet the gang at the river or pond and build a huge fire on the bank for warming up periods; then, if you were a girl, have your skates strapped on by your "fellow", and for a couple of hours, singly, or in pairs, or in long lines with criss-cross handclasp, go streaking and circling over the ice.

Another favorite sport was coasting. Colfax has hills, real hills. There was Sid Williams' Hill in the eastern part of town. We could start at the Luther corner, slide down past the home of James Norman Hall, who at that time was a little school boy, and, I am safe in saying, had never heard of Tahiti or of Kitchner and his "mob," or about a Mutiny on the Bounty.

Quite likely "Norm" Hall was on the hill coasting with the rest of us. I never noticed. How should I know that he was destined to become one of Colfax' most famous sons and that we should all be treating him with extra special respect? I had observed that he was a handsome well mannered boy, but, after all, he was one of the little boys, being, I suppose, a couple of grades below me and those in my crowd, in school.

At any rate, we would continue past the homes of the elite of the town, past the Grand Hotel, turn north at the Woods Bink, and continue down the main business street. If conditions were just right, we could slide over the tracks and to the river.

Then came the long trek pulling the sleds back up the hill, it was more than a mile to the top, but "the mountin' th' t'". There was laughing and goodnatured banter all the way. There was opportunity to sing, and talk with your "girl" or "fellow."

Gaining the crest, there was the thrill of your voices on the wind on single sleds, "We'll go round 'em like a long, thin card which accommodated as many as sixteen people. If you managed just right, you might get to sit next to the one you liked best, and that gave you a thrill, as it was a necessary and

legitimate practice to hold on to the one in front of you on the sled. Thus we shuttled happily back and forth whole evenings.

The second best hill for coasting was in the south part of town, starting at the James B. Weaver home at the summit, coasting down past our house and on down through the business district. This hill was never so popular as Sid Williams Hill. It was not so uniformly steep, and the rides were less breath taking and full of thrills.

In school, football was just coming into popularity. While I was in high school, a student from Grinnell College was engaged to organize and coach the first team at Colfax. In spite of the fact that, when his raw recruits played their first game, only one on the team had ever seen a game played, the young coach whipped the group into a winning team. During the first two or three years of their existence as a team they won the state championship. Our small town almost suffered municipal apoplexy. To think that our team could meet and defeat teams from cities like Des Moines, and from large towns such as Grinnell and Newton!

As for us youngsters, we did not need football pep meetings to arouse our flagging school spirit. We did not require a band to inspire us into action. It was not necessary to appoint a cheer leader whose duty it was to dress up in fancy uniform, prance up and down before us and perform all sorts of antics in an effort to see that we did our part in noise making sufficient to show the team that they had our full endorsement and support, and to show the enemy that their chances of winning were very slim. Our enthusiasm was spontaneous, and without artificial inspiration we yelled ourselves hoarse at every game.

My interest in this game never flagged until the time when Dick was injured so badly that those who were at the game despaired of his life. But Jess would not give up. He worked calmly and untiringly with Dick until a faint gasp from him assured Jess that he was still alive. Then Jess began to cry unmanly tears while others took over. Dick lay for weeks so mangled internally that we scarcely dared to touch his bed. My enthusiasm for the game never revived.

Part of our fun came from co-operating with the schools and other community organizations in giving entertainments of various kinds. These were primarily to raise money for different projects, but we managed as a bi-product to secure a considerable amount of enjoyment from practicing, selling tickets, ushering, and general participation.

We were particularly set up if someone asked us to be in a play. Rehearsing and preparing for these consumed hours of our time. I still remember the dramatic first line of one of these--"By yonder fair moon whose radiance is reflected in a thousand dewey gems, I abjure you to remove that mask." I presume the more melo-dramatic a selection was, the more it appealed to us.

At times professionals came to town and offered to manage and direct our plays and entertainments for a certain percentage of the proceeds. Among these, one that I remember was a minstrel show. We all became darkies, learned and rehearsed our songs and rehearsed our end man jokes. It was fun. I was always given a character part in all these plays, that of a garrulous old woman, or a sour old spinster, or an unfeath house maid, or a fat end man. I see now that it was a sad mistake for me to have accepted and entered into these character parts so wholeheartedly. I do not advise it for those romantically inclined. It puts one temporarily in a bad light before the young eligibles of the community.

Another show I remember, directed by outside talent, was a "Tom Thumb wedding." This time the very young children became the actors. The directors brought trunks full of miniature costumes; tiny dress suits for the little boys and gorgeous little trimm'd for the girls. One little fop became the bride, another the groom. One was the maid of honor. A couple of them played the parts of the groom's parents, two or them the bride's parents, et cetera. The child actors were precious in the eyes of their adoring relatives and friends.

The whole town turned out to our various community affairs and filled the church or hall to overflowing. Sometimes we had to repeat the show in order to give all who clamored for admittance a chance to attend.

I cannot recall that any carnivals came to town in those days, but the carnival spirit had opportunity for outlet. There were the yearly county fairs for those who could manage to attend. These provided for concessions which gave opportunity for us, wide-eyed, to gaze upon two-headed dogs, wild men of Borneo, giants and pygmies. There were shooting galleries and corn games.

At one time we tricked Mother into taking her place at a corn game. She enjoyed putting the grains of corn on the squares, but felt outraged when she discovered she had, with her ten cents, won a very nice aluminum kettle.

"Well," she said, "I won't take it. I won't carry that pan all around the grounds and have every one know I have been patronizing a gambling device."

And she didn't. Some other member of the family had to carry it. She didn't even enjoy being with a group who thus blatantly showed to the world that some member had stooped to such practices.

At the fairs were horse races, contests in speed between various horse-motored fire companies, prize awards for the best cakes, the prettiest quilts, the best marmalade and pickles and canned fruits.

Now and then Ringling Brothers or Sells Brothers came to town with their wondrous displays of lions and tigers and elephants and trained dogs, trapeze performers and side shows. It was most thrilling from the time the huge tent was erected and the painted wagons creaked and rumbled into the grounds, to the time when everything was dismantled and the wagons creaked and rumbled out again.

Those were the days of barn-storming, when theater companies travelled through the country and gave shows in tents or barns or any available shelter. These travelling companies showed in our old opera house until it was condemned as unsafe for such crowds as presented themselves. After the opera house was abandoned, the shows were given in tents. It was at one of these that I had opportunity to cry again over the death of little Eva and the beatings of Uncle Tom, and to experience the chills and thrills of seeing Eliza in her dramatic escape across the ice floes. The Chase-Lister show with headquarters at Newton was our most frequent visitant.

Among the older, more fashionable set at that time, the most common form of entertainment was the reception. These were huge affairs. Each lady in the upper social circles would plan to have a reception about once a year. She would send out invitations to a hundred guests or more. Every one accepted. The homes were mostly of sufficient size to accomodate the crowd. If not, the list was staggered so that the guests came at different hours.

At these affairs the ladies of the town were accustomed to invite the young high school girls to serve the refreshments. We felt no less flattered than those who had been invited as guests. We dressed up in our best and made ourselves look as pretty as possible, for we knew that all the guests would look beautiful and that the houses would be bright and shining and bedecked with lovely flowers. We must fit into the picture. We conceitedly felt that we were invited to serve in order to add to the decorations.

Sometimes we were asked to sit up with the dead. In those times no self respecting corpse was ever left unattended. Most anything might happen. According to the old women, cats frequent homes wherein the dead were lying. They would gain access to such a home in spite of all precautions, and proceed to mutilate the body of the loved one. Some one must watch night and day to prevent this and other possible catastrophies. Usually older people officiated at these all night vigils, but now and then, if the deceased were a young child, it was thought more appropriate to have young people.

It seems strange and eery now to record these night watches as part of our recreation, but truth compels me to do so. The experience appealed to us because of its unusual nature. Besides, the bereaved family made available quantities of good food, so we ate pies and cakes and fried chicken at intervals all night, and in between times we talked and played games. The next day we could boast to our classmates of how sleepy we were, and could have the satisfaction of telling them why. It was legitimately part of our recreational program.

As we grew up, we did not have time to consider the advantages of becoming juvenile delinquents. In fact, in spite of the fact that there were eight of us or more to supervise, Father and Mother kept track of our movements far too closely to permit of our indulging ourselves in any activites that would lead to that end. One incident will serve to show this fact. At one time I decided to stay at Vera's all night. That was before the day of telephones. I told Dick to report my intentions when he reached home. But that wasn't soon enough. At eleven o'clock Father arrived at the Stouffer home. He wasn't in an especially jovial mood after having walked that precipitous mile from our home. Unfeelingly, he insisted that I should dress and accompany him as he returned home. I have enjoyed other walks more.

CHAPTER XX

Now It Can Be Revealed

I can well remember when, in middle class circles, it was immodest and inelegant for women or older girls to show to the world any part of the anatomy except the unprovocative head and hands. Clothing must completely cover the body from the chin down. Sleeves must be long. The natural curves of the body must be subdued and concealed by layers of starched muslin garments.

It was not alone desirable to conceal one's self from head to foot, it was distinctly improper even to mention the articles which made up one's under garments, especially the innermost ones. A girl would have been signally disgraced if any of her "fellows" so much as caught a glimpse of any of these "unmentionables" hanging on the line after a wash. There were various parts of the body that were also unmentionables, of which one speaks rather casually today. One avoided speaking of his legs if possible, but in case of necessity, the modest and elegant person would refer to these nether appendages as "limbs."

But now, for you of a new generation, by means of a sort of four dimensioned eye, neither time nor solid walls nor red faces need interfere too seriously with our observing the dressing activities of a girl in her early twenties, on a winter evening, some time during the first decade of the century. I will accompany you in this backward expedition. When we turn to observe this girl, she has already pulled on her silk and wool under suit. We see her straighten out the ankle length legs and give a twist to the long sleeves to make them sit more comfortably. She buttons the long string of buttons up the front of the under suit, and ties the silk tape close wround her neck. She draws on her long black cotton stockings, folding over the excess fullness in the lower edge of the underwear at the ankles, so that the stocking will look as smooth as possible. With interest we watch her put on her high patent leather shoes with cloth tops, and button them up with the long sterling silver button hook, a recent prized gift from a friend. She reaches for her corset, puts it around her and fastens the stiff steel clasps down the front. As she looks in the mirror, she puts her hands around her hips on either side and twists from side to side to see if her waist line is diminutive enough to satisfy herself and pass muster with her friends. Not wholly pleased, she reaches behind and pulls the laces a bit tighter, securing them at the waist by tying a knot.

She pulls on her starched, knee length muslin "drawers" with the ruffles of lace or embroidery at the lower edge, and pins a starched ruffle edged with lace across her bosom.

She pulls her starched muslin corset cover over her head. We stoop to examine the corset cover and find it made with a hand crocheted lace yoke with wide straps of the same lace over the shoulders and perhaps a band of the lace sewed into the arm holes to provide a concealing cap sleeve. She may pin on a small bustle. She dons a knee length petticoat and two other long petticoats all starched and ruffled and edged with lace or embroidery.

She looks at herself in the mirror with growing satisfaction. All her natural curves are effectively concealed by the many starchy stiff layers.

It is not Saturday, so she hadn't needed to take a bath, but she must scrub her face and neck and ears. At this time she may live in a house with a bath room where this can be accomplished with dispatch in the "tin" wash bowl. If not, she may be fortunate enough to have a commode in her room equipped with a large flowered wash bowl and pitcher and a "slop jar" to match, for receiving wastes. But more than likely we will see her repair to the kitchen where she will attend to the scrubbing in a wash pan in the kitchen sink. We may see her help herself to hot water from the reservoir of the kitchen stove, or from the large steaming tea kettle. After the scrubbing, she wipes herself on the common long roller towel close by the sink, selecting, if she can, a clean place that does not show signs of former use. Don't be too much shocked if you find she fails to wash her teeth or if she gives only cursory attention to her nails.

Back in her room she combs out her hair. It has probably never been cut. If she is fortunate, it will be long and heavy. It may even reach to her hips or beyond. She may be able to boast to her friends that it is so long she can sit on the ends of it, in which case she holds her comb in her hand at this point in her dressing, turns from side to side shaking out her hair and gazing at her "woman's glory" with a considerable amount of pride.

She has washed her hair on Saturday when she took her bath, and since it is winter, she had to dry it by rubbing it with a towel and fanning it as she sat close to the stove, or, if her home could boast of a furnace, she had gotten down on her hands and knees and held her head over the register. It is small wonder that she doesn't care to go through this ordeal more than a few times a year.

As we watch, she lights the lamp and inserts a curling iron in the top of the chimney. At intervals she tests the iron with a wet finger to see if it gives the proper sizzle. If so, she winds one strand of hair after another around the cylinder of the curler and waits a few seconds for each to heat. From time to time, we see her test the iron on a piece of paper. If she finds it scorches the paper, she blows upon the iron and waves it in the air until it cools sufficiently. She has before now experienced the tragedy of having a curl fall from her head scorched and ruined. She wants to avoid that. She completes her coiffure according to the fashion prevalent at the time.

She is ready now for her dress. She puts on her shirt waist with long sleeves and high neck. We see her pin her skirt supporter around her waist and pull the shirt waist down all around under it so that the waist looks neat and trim.

She dons her long, full, completely lined skirt with the band of crinoline at the lower edge to give it body and stiffness, and she adjusts the skirt in the back over the steel prongs of the supporter.

We see her pin her chateline watch to her left shoulder, put a long chain around her neck, to which is suspended her gold locket containing her "fellow's" picture. She fastens her "friendship" bracelet around her wrist. We observe that the bracelet is made of heavy gold wire with loops at intervals on which are hung the gold hearts which have been given her by friends at various times, and on which are engraved the names of the donors.

A little self-consciously, she sprinkles a little talcum powder on a small piece of chamois skin and rubs it lightly over her face. She bites her lips and pinches her cheeks to make them red, leans forward and looks at herself in the mirror with much satisfaction. She steps back and preens herself. She is ready to go, but will not put on her hat until her escort comes. It would never do for him to think she was ready and waiting for him.

When the escort arrives, we see our girl dawdling over the completion of her toilet. She places her hat at different angles, pins and unpins it with the gold-headed hat pin which is perhaps ten or twelve inches long. She reddens her lips and cheeks again, wets her finger in her mouth and draws it over her eye brows

to take off all the telltale signs of powder, assumes the fashionable posture, chest up, hips back, and then she appears. She knows she is properly and modestly attired. She thinks she looks nice, and so does he.

The escort does not think he looks so bad himself. The trousers are fashionably tight and short. His coat is cut high with abbreviated lapels. His celluloid collar with turn down corners surprises us.

As his girl arrives, we find him fingering his new watch fob. This ribbon and gold appendage is attached to his watch, which is slipped into the watch pocket of his vest. As the couple leave the house, he dons his stiff derby hat, a new one, which he has ostentatiously held in his hand as she entered the room.

We have observed what we came specifically to see. Now we had better clamber back into our mid-century niche before the world rolls on and leaves us so far behind we can't catch up. From memory I can tell you some of the strange things you would see if we felt it safe to stay longer.

Going into the kitchen, you would find the house dresses of the early times were usually of the Mother Hubbard variety. This was a voluminous garment usually made of calico and was fulled into a yoke back and front. With its long skirt and sleeves and high neck, I can scarcely conceive of any worse invention for a garment in which to work.

If the lady's work took her out doors, she would snatch her sun bonnet from its hook. Under no circumstances would she risk ruining her complexion by forgetting to don her sun bonnet. These bonnets were made with a protruding front portion stiffly starched or slatted, combined with a puffed portion in the rear, which terminated in a ruffle or a flare at the lower edge. This ruffle was designed to protect the neck from the pernicious rays of the sun.

For negligee you would find women donning "dressing sacques." These were similar to kimonos of a later day, but were short, reaching scarcely below the waist.

You would laugh at the bathing suits for women. They had to be concealing. If we girls were determined to try to learn to swim, we must at least be modest about it. The suits were made of wool cloth, with matching bloomers, knee length skirt and elbow sleeves. With this suit we wore long black stockings. The outfit became so cumbersome when wet that there was little chance that we would ever become proficient in swimming.

You would see much color in women's costumes, but you would observe many women in black. As a rule, black was put on for a purpose. When a member of the family died, it was customary to advertize one's grief to the world by "putting on mourning." Families who were very correct would wear black from head to foot for several months.

A widow assumed "widow's weeds," a black trailing crepe veil which she wore on all occasions. As I remember, if she wished to retain the respect of the community, she was supposed never to relinquish a perpetually sad expression, nor enter into any pleasant or cheerful activity for the given time. Presumably, it was expected she would sit around and weep during her mourning period. I suppose she was thus, by dress and mein, to warn all suitors that she felt too sad as yet to consider any courtship or proposal.

Hats, you would find, were usually fearful and wonderful creations, heavily laden with flowers or feathers, sometimes sitting atop our heads. A few years later they were fitted well down over our ears. The long hat pins were essential for anchoring the perched-up variety, especially if the hat had one of the large crowns we thought so elegant.

Style and size of hats varied with the years. I had one huge sailor hat which forced me to walk in a very straight, stiff line, when passing through the narrow aisles of a sleeping car, to prevent the hat from colliding with the walls on either side. I had one hat trimmed with a huge bow of black velvet lined with pink. I had one trimmed with two trailing ostrich plumes, one black, one orange.

Our hair was as wonderful as our hats, even more fearful. One sign that we were grown up was that we could abandon braids and curls and receive our hair in

to do up our hair. Another sign was the lengthening of our skirts. Children wore short skirts. Women wore long ones.

At one period after we were "grown", we drew our hair up smoothly at the sides and back, arranging it in a smooth, upstanding pompadour in front. At another time we arranged it over a wire "rat" which encircled our heads, and we filled in the center of this roll with a cap of curls, very often arranged off the head from a switch which was then pinned on in the proper place.

Some people had to buy "transformations" to supplement their own hair and the switches in this elaborate hair dress. Transformations were made of human hair like a switch, but were fashioned to form a long fring-like affair, designed to assist in covering "rats" effectively.

During the switch era, we had a spell when we wore heavy artificial braids encircling our heads. Then again nearly everyone wore a band of black velvet ribbon around her head. One era decreed that we attain an owlish appearance by pinning huge rolls of hair over our ears. I doubt if it gave us the wise appearance that an owl is presumed to have.

CHAPTER XXI

We Are Emancipated

But a drastic change was in the offing. Little did the girl, dressing for her date, realize that during the next ten or fifteen years she would participate in what proved to be in essence a drawn out "strip tease" performance, in which one bulky starched garment after another would find its way to the discard, and that in the end an entirely different looking girl would emerge from her dressing room.

To accomplish this meant that a disproportionate amount of our time during this transformation period must be spent on our clothes. We didn't just know what we wanted, and thus rapid and drastic style changes caused us continually to find ourselves hopelessly out of fashionable step. A considerable change of style sent us frantically to work in the sewing room, with scissors and patterns and findings, in the desperate attempt to keep abreast of the times.

At the first of the century, not only were style changes temperamental, we were not even satisfied with the figures nature had bestowed upon us and we made rather convincing and successful efforts to show to the world that we were not what we were. We were not consistent even in that. We barely succeeded in proving that we were so, when we decided to be thus.

Waist lines were erratic as to size and location. Though the days of actual lacing were passe, when I was young, a wasp waist was still much to be desired. It was not too uncommon to see waists eighteen or nineteen inches in circumference. Divide by pi and you will see that would mean a waist of only five or six inches in diameter.

Sometime later, women decided it was not desirable to have any marked waist line at all, or any hips or any bust. We waked up at the beginning of one season to discover that women were supposed to be practically cylindrical in shape. The real waist line gave way to a simulated one at the "mid-riff" of the hips; busts were flattened down with tight confiners, and there we were, as curveless and beautiful as our brothers, or so we thought. Those who had been most faithful to the decree imposing the small waist line now opposed the innovation, insisting that the human figure was something it was wicked to distort. They had become so accustomed to the small waist that they had come to believe that the decree calling for such a waist had come from Heaven, along with the date when we observe Thanksgiving Day, our system of weights and measures, and our cumbersome calendar. But even these dissenters soon succumbed to the evil custom and developed boy-like figures along with the rest of us.

At this point in our emancipation we literally breathed a sigh of relief. There was now no point in drawing in the waist. How good it felt to breathe!

Then there was the time when it was decreed that the waist line rightfully belonged at the diaphragm level and the Empress dress was the thing. Again we wore tight fitting princess dresses cut in one piece with no actual waist line, but curves a plenty.

Length of skirt shuttled erratically back and forth from floor length to just below the knees. My first remembrance of skirts for adults was of very long ones, so long that they swept the floor or street and had to be finished at the lower edge with brush braid to withstand the wear and tear. When we walked we had to grasp our skirts with one hand at the back and hold them daintily to one side to keep them out of the mud and dirt of the street. When skirts began to creep upwards, the ultra-conservatives, as usual, predicted dire results from the daring and immoral exposures practiced by the young generation.

The first step in shortening the skirts was the introduction of the slit skirt. This skirt was long, but it had a slit at one side, sometimes cut half way up to the knees. As one strode along, an observer could catch fleeting and provocative glimpses of legs which he had never known before were there. It was an interesting sight, even though the legs were still incased in long black cotton hose. The logical next step was the introduction of lace hose. These were still black, but made in lace designs. Conservatives, again, hesitated to take up the new style. It was shockingly revealing.

The slit skirt, at the time, was almost a necessity if we wished to walk at all, for the "hobble" skirt was in style. We had decided at that time to become the shape of a sort of double cone, with one small end at the feet, the other at the head. To accomplish this, the skirts were made rather full at the top, but narrowed down at the bottom, so that we must of necessity walk with a mincing step, perhaps a little more or less than eighteen inches long. Striding for women was of necessity out of fashion. At college age I had to learn to walk all over again. Stepping over a puddle of water or a small ditch was apt to prove disastrous. We were prone to miscalculate and attempt a twenty-four inch step with an eighteen inch leeway, and down we would go with our finery in the dust or mud, brought up sharp and short by the limitations of our fashionable skirts.

We had lots of fun poked at us. Gayle was watching me while I was making a skirt of this sort one time. "Grace," he said in serious tones, "I have a pair of pants I don't want. I think you could make two skirts out of them"

One type of skirt in vogue during the period was the "golf skirt." It was long and full. Golf skirts were of sufficiently heavy material so that the lining and the crinolin at the lower edge could be eliminated. If anyone ever played golf in these skirts, I never knew it. In fact, so far as the experience of most of us was concerned, golf was many years in the future. When golf time came, it would have sadly impaired any lady's "form" if she had been compelled to carry one of those long heavy skirts around the course.

Our present day shoe styles are the product of evolution, we all, except for formal occasions, when society people wore party slippers. Shoes, as I remember them, were inevitably pointed toed and not comfortable to wear. Many parents insisted upon their daughters' continuing with high shoes after low shoes became fashionable, because, they said, we "needed support for our ankles" or because we needed the warmth. After much grumbling on our part, the parent group finally gave in that we might buy a pair of oxfords for summer wear.

That was the beginning of the end of high shoes. We never wanted to return to them, and to have the trial of the extra timeconsuming lacing or buttoning process. "Spats" came into vogue for winter wear and were popular for a few years. These spats were made of heavy broadcloth, usually black to match our shoes, and they were fitted and buttoned to the ankles.

To complete the covering up process in the early day, most of us wore high necks. These necks were often made pointed and boned behind the ears, so that not even a square inch of neck was exposed. The transition to lower necks was made less objectionable to those with Puritan ancestors, by the wearing of a black velvet ribbon band around the bare neck.

I well remember how shocked my father was at my first "low neck." He had hoped never to see a daughter of his wear a dress like that. The dress was a black taffeta and I had thought it was quite elegant, but when he spoke so emphatically, I must work it over to accede to his wishes. I had my picture taken in the dress and was amazed, several years later, to find the dress had a simple square neck cut scarcely two inches below the normal neck line.

Sleeves changed drastically in cut from season to season. At one time we wore the "leg-o-muttons," uncannily resembling what the name implies. There was a huge amount of upstanding fullness, confined with gathers and shirrings at the top, with the sleeve tapering down to a tight wrist. During another season we had a sleeve in which the fullness was reversed, plain at the top and with a baggy fullness confined in a cuff at the wrist. These were called "bishop" sleeves. At one time we had sleeves sewed into an armhole that reached almost to the waist. These gave us a silhouette resembling penguins. This style was a nuisance. An escort couldn't even take the arm of his girl without getting all mixed up in the "webbing."

For those who believed in excessive coverage and concealment, the last straw of outrageous exposure was added when "peek-a-boo" blouses were introduced. These were made of thin dotted or embroidered swiss, or georgette, or chiffon, and revealed "to advantage" the corset covers trimmed with the wide bands of hand-crocheted lace. As we became bolder, the wide-shouldered corset cover was discarded and the camisole became popular. It was mad of silk or satin and brazenly introduced narrow strips of ribbon as shoulder straps.

So there we stood at last in all our impudent effrontery, wearing thin shirt waists with V-necks and revealing silk or satin camisoles, wearing slinky unlined skirts almost to our knees, over unstarched silk slips and scanty under wear and with lace hose, feet in low shoes and arms bare to the elbows or above.

By the end of the quarter century we had wisely decided to accept the form nature had bestowed upon us, and had pretty well stabilized our dress to conform to its contours. By that time, by making minor changes, we could wear a dress several years without feeling too conspicuously out of style. We had ceased to go off on so many tangents in search of our independence. But it had been a hectic and difficult time.

During the period of metamorphosis, and for some time afterward, conservatives of both sexes continued to make uncomplimentary remarks about our apparel, our hair and our general make-up, but we were becoming emancipated and went ahead, pretending to close our ears. We were much more comfortable than we had been in the old encasements and stood our ground until the "die-hards" got used to us that way.

Mother reconciled herself to the change much sooner than did Father. She looked us over one day when we were going to a party and said, "Girls, you look nice. I guess, after all, modesty does not depend so much on what one wears." Father finally arrived, somewhat in the forefront of the other slow moving and conservative males.

Before we were really through, we were destined to adopt the "red light" practice of using rouge and lip stick, of courageously bobbing our hair, of going in for all sorts of sports, of adopting many habits of the men, good, bad and indifferent, of entering the business and professional field in competition with men, of taking charge of the pocket book, of insisting on casting our ballots on election day and on wearing swimming suits in which we could swim.

CHAPTER XXII

Church Zeal and Dissensions

On Sundays we went to church. That was the "Lord's Day." We indulged ourselves by sleeping an hour later than usual. But the family once up, things had to happen.

By the time I was sixteen, my Sunday church program consisted of teaching a Sunday School Class at 9:45, singing in the choir or playing the piano at the church services at eleven o'clock, and at 7:30, assisting with the youngsters at Junior Endeavor at 2:30, participating in Christian Endeavor at 6:30.

Preparing meals and meeting other physical demands of the family and of the household had to be skillfully sandwiched in between the events of this almost continuous program of church activities. It was an arduous day, never a sabbath day.

But the possibilities that we could delete any of these events from our Sunday program no more occurred to us than that we could go without our dinners. We had grown up with the idea that Sunday was church day, and that each of us had his own particular responsibilities to perform to keep the spiritual wheels of the community revolving.

Added spiritual impetus must be contributed during the week. Thursday nights many of the most faithful and zealous of us, young and old, went to prayer meeting. Friday nights, we had choir practice. In addition to these regular meetings, we planned and conducted a considerable number of church parties, entertainments and church "sociables." Our objective in these was two-fold, recreational and "mercenary." We often charged admittance, and contributed the net profits to some organization of the church.

In the summer time our ice cream sociables were often held outside on private lawns. In that case we decorated the place with jack-o-lanterns and festoons bright colored strips of crepe paper to attract the attention of prospective customers, and to give atmosphere to the occasion.

But throughout the year we looked forward to the big festive occasion at Christmas. Christmas was little observed at our home. In most homes the children hung up their stockings, but for some reason or other, instead of doing that, each of us put a plate on the table for Santa to fill. I suppose the plates could be more easily washed than stockings. Santa never missed bringing us candy and nuts, but rarely did he leave us any presents. I think our family was too big. The jolly fellow was discouraged when he saw the array of plates and thought candy would do.

At the church we usually had an elaborate program in which the whole Sunday School took part. It often fell to my lot to assist in the training of the children who participated in the ambitious affair. Every night after school, for weeks, we brought together seventy-five to a hundred restless youngsters to learn new songs, new pieces, new dialogues. As I see it now, we dissipated our own energies and perverted the spirit of the season, by putting on cheap cantatas about Santa Claus and his reindeers and his workshop in the far north.

A few days before Christmas the women met to make bright green, red and white mosquito netting sacks which they filled with hard Christmas candies, topped off with an orange or an apple. One of these sacks was prepared for each child in the Sunday School. A huge pine tree was installed in the church and decorated with strings of cranberries and pop corn and dabs of cotton to simulate snow. Gifts were brought from homes to be distributed to friends and various members of the family. The program was presented with more or less finesse and Santa Claus came bounding in to distribute the candy and presents.

Through it all there was little, if any, mention of the Christ child, or the adoration of the shepherds and the star they saw in the east, or of the journey of the Wise Men and of their gifts to the Holy Child, of the sojourn of Mary and Joseph in the Bethlehem stable. The chief emphasis, as I remember it, was laid upon receiving--little, if any, upon giving. At the end of the program one could hear, "Just see this doll I got," "How many presents did you get," "Let me see that swell knife."

It was inevitable that one child left the scene of the merriment broken-hearted because all he carried home was his little sack of candy and his one lone orange, and Christmas was over.

It will be seen a much greater proportion of our time was spent in church activities than is true of the child of today. This may have been partially due to the fact that not so many things were competing for our time. In our particular case, it is possible that much of our zealous devotion was due to the fact that Mother and Father set the pattern for us. I don't remember that they ever used undue pressure to persuade us to go, but they went themselves, rain or shine, and they conditioned affairs so that going just seemed a matter of course for the family.

Their devotion no doubt stemmed from the fact that my grandfather Tripp was, among his other accomplishments, a minister. He had brought his family to Iowa a few years after it had been admitted to the union as a state. He purchased land in Clear Creek Township, built himself a log cabin and ensconced his family therein. He farmed for a livelihood, did blacksmithing to accommodate his neighbors, preached on Sundays to promote the spiritual welfare of the community. It was something then to have one in the neighborhood who could preach. Preaching was mostly done at that time by circuit riders who travelled from place to place.

My grandfather belonged to a new, and at that time, little known sect, called the Christian Church or the Church of Christ. It had been organized in the early years of the nineteenth century by dissenters from various denominations, who, believing that protestantism was losing much of its potential power through the strife and antagonisms arising as a result of its division into Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Congregational communions, sought to found a church on principles upon which all could unite. The chief tenet of the new church was, "Where the Bible speaks we will speak. Where the Bible is silent, we will be silent."

It was a noble experiment. These people hoped to establish an organic union of the churches with what seemed to them a reasonable approach to the problem. But the struggling new congregation found itself, for some years, only adding to the strife and antagonism already existing at that period. The older churches clung sentimentally and tenaciously to their old creeds and practices. They did not take kindly to this infant American born upstart, which they considered an interloper in a field already filled with established churches.

As it turned out, it is possible these churches were at least partially right, since in the end, our people failed to accomplish their chief objective, that of organic union among the churches, and to all intents and purposes became only another denomination, finally accepted as such by the church conscious world.

But the new church in the beginning had to fight for its survival against existing denominations. At one time in my teens, in searching for books to read, I ran across a little book entitled, "Orthodoxy in the Civil Courts." I found it to be the recital of a civil trial in which our church sought and succeeded in proving itself an orthodox church. I pondered over the meaning of the term "orthodox" but realized in a vague sort of way it meant proper and legitimate.

And thus from this heritage, religious controversial issues came to assume a disproportionate importance in our lives.

At the turn of the century we were still fighting. We were imbued with the missionary spirit and still had hopes that our "erring" brethren in other churches could be won over to our way of thinking. We children had been brought up on doctrine and theology. My father was well versed in it. We had theological literature around the house and we were exposed to church doctrine through conversations of visiting ministers and other church dignitaries. We felt sorry for our friends in other churches who had inherited so many "misconceptions." We did not hesitate to give expression to our view, since we were not at all certain that people holding such views as our friends held would ever make it through the pearly gates when they died.

We found these "misguided persons" no less eager to defend their own principles, a fact of much amazement to us, for, after all, the truth was "as plain as the nose on your face," we said. So it came about that one could muster up a first class religious battle on any one of at least a dozen issues.

There was, for instance, the question of creed. Our church did not believe in man-made creeds. Each individual was supposed to read the Bible and decide upon his own individual beliefs. Thus, even when we visited other churches, we restrained from repeating any part of the creed with them, for fear we would inadvertently give expression to something we didn't really believe.

There was the question of the name of the church. The Bible never spoke of Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians, only of Christians, or Disciples, or the Church of Christ. We insisted that since the various names served to separate the churches, they should for that reason not be recognized. We quoted the scriptures, "The disciples were called "Christians" first at Antioch." If we succeeded in arousing the ire of our antagonists sufficiently, they would sluriously call us "Campbellites." That made us furious. It wasn't that we were not proud of our original organizers. We just refused to accept any man-made appellation.

We didn't like it when anyone spoke of Sunday as the "Sabbath Day." That loomed as an important dereliction. In reply to their quotation "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy" we would counter by repeating the one which says, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of Truth." We insisted that when people called Sunday "The Sabbath" they were not making that division correctly, that the command to keep the seventh day as a sabbath day, or rest day, was given to the Jews in the Old Testament and never repeated in the New Testament which was, after all, the Christian's "rule for faith and practice." Sunday, we insisted, was our "Lord's Day," a day of worship and not of rest. "The disciples met on the first day of the week to break bread."

We were glad our people held to this belief, for aside from the obligation to attend church services, we could indulge in games and sports and secular activities as we chose. We could even do some embroidery or sewing on Sunday without fear that every stitch we put in would "have to be removed by our noses." We could chop wood on Sunday without taking the risk that by doing so we might be translated to some far flung planet as the man in the moon had been.

There were other ways we gained by holding to the idea of having the Bible speak or keep silent for us. This was in regard to the amusements in which we indulged. My father could find nothing expressly forbidding dancing and card playing in the Bible, so, barring restrictions with regard to the company we kept, we were free to indulge in such activities at a time when they were taboo for the young people in a good many churches. Now and then we had a minister or evangelist who would inveigh against these things most vigorously, but we sat tight, secure in the knowledge that in our church each one could interpret his Bible according to his own conscience. In that respect it was easy for us to interpret it so that it fitted in with our plans and desires.

We had congregational government. Each church was a law unto itself. We sniffed contemptuously at our friends in certain churches because they had a hierarchy of officials, bishops, who selected and sent them their ministers, and dictated their policies in general. We contended that there was no place in the scriptures to show that such a practice was ever countenanced in the early church, and that so far as we were concerned, we felt it must be a practice borrowed from the Catholic church along with some other customs they had. In these days a statement of that kind would be construed as an insult. Of all things a protestant resented, it was the charge that any ritual had been inherited or borrowed from the Catholic church.

We had communion at every Sunday morning service. Other churches had special and rarer occasions for observance of this sacrament.

Communion service impressed me greatly. The elders of the church took turns sitting at either side of the table and taking charge of it. Often they would make a few remarks. My father sometimes made more than a few. I was very proud of him when he presided, and thought to myself that his little "sermonette" was often better than the sermon itself.

Those were the days before clerics had put in their appearance in such vast hordes, so we used a common communion oblet, each communicant touching his lips to it and taking a small sip of the wine, whichever sweet grape juice. The

plates and cups from which communion was served were of silver, and seemed most elegant to me. The church was quiet except for some subdued, sweet music played by the organist and the quiet rustling of deacons as they passed the emblems. We thought it a great error for other churches to observe this ritual less often than once a week, and we did not hesitate to tell our friends what we thought. We said that since the Bible asserted that the apostles met to break bread on the first day of the week, it was logical to presume that meant every Sunday. Anyhow, we defied them to show there was any authority in the Bible for a three month's observance of communion.

We had revival meetings of our own variety. We did not believe in insisting on the emotional type of conversion. To receive the "Gift of the Holy Spirit" to most of us meant salvation itself, not a peculiar emotional feeling that descended upon us to assure us that our sins had been forgiven and that we were "saved." We expected each individual to think out for himself whether or not he wished to align himself with the church and its work, and then simply come forward, shake hands with the minister, and declare his belief in "Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God." Baptism followed later. Personal solicitation in the audience was discouraged.

Conversion in some of our sister churches in those days was less simple. At times we visited their revivals, I regret to say with little of the spirit of reverence or worship. We were curious to see the "mourner's bench" with its rows of kneeling petitioners struggling to receive the "Holy Spirit." There was much pleading of various of the church members to persuade people to go to the mourner's bench, many "Amens," emotional songs and entreaties to assist them in receiving the Holy Spirit, as they knelt thus. My father said that in his young days he had known people to shout, roll in the aisles, and even to fall unconscious at such times. These practices were growing less and less prevalent at the time of my youth.

The most delectable bone of contention with which we dealt was baptism. That offered a never-ending field for argument, to which we could return again and again. We found that the New Testament had originally been written in Greek. We immersionist youngsters acquired a few Greek terms which were designed to strike awe and terror into the hearts of our adversaries. We insisted that the Greek word "baptizo," from which our word "baptize" came, meant to dip, plunge or immerse, that it had no meaning which could possibly be construed as sprinkling. Thus the Bible "spoke." We contended that those who practiced sprinkling as a means of baptism, had no authority for so doing, and their communicants were not really baptized. Who knows in what dire consequences that omission might result, when those poor benighted people presented themselves for entrance to the gates of the Kingdom? For our part, we didn't care to risk the omission, for the Bible said, "Arise and be baptized for the remission of your sins." If you were not baptized, your sins would not be remitted. It would just be too bad to bear this heavy weight of sin throughout life and even present oneself before St. Peter dragging it along with him.

It was a tragic picture we painted. Sometimes our opponents came to watch our people immersed. We were furious when some laughed and giggled during the ceremony. A sentiment had developed around this sacrament which made it sacred and serious to us.

Father had told us that adhering to the practice of immersion in the early days had presented a real problem. There was, of course, no provision for baptistries in the school houses where meetings were held. Baptism must be accomplished in rivers and ponds. In the winter time, holes had to be cut in the ice, and the prospective members were reverently immersed in the ice-cold water. One would have thought the process would have been pretty effective in cooling the ardor of the would-be Christians, but this did not prove to be true. Some of those thus brought into the fold arose singing from the "watery grave," singing, but still participating in the fight for the life of their church. My father told a story of one of the leaders of whom it was said, "He arose from the water with the Bible in one hand and a handful of clubs in the other which he has been throwing ever since."

One rarely hears preachers of today arguing so tenaciously over church doctrine and theology. Churches now are more co-operative and much less inclined

ful of irrelevant and minor differences than they were in that day. In retrospect, I am forced to admit that much of our religious zeal was in reality a partisan zeal which placed special emphasis upon proving we were right on certain controversial issues. Courses taken later in religion and philosophy served to make me realize the real significance of religion and the Bible. At first I was shocked at the views I heard expressed in those classes. Doctrine had loomed so important in my life that I felt Drake University, a Christian school, founded by our own people, had beaten a treacherous retreat from the straight and narrow path.

At Drake I heard much of "higher critics" as opposed to "fundamentalists" and found myself, through much travail, deserting the fundamentalist camp, thus sharing in the retreat, if it were such. I came to believe that each denomination had had its own particular contribution to make to the religious life of the times. That was a new thought to me. It had never occurred to me that the Baptists and the Presbyterians and the Methodists had made any worthwhile contributions. At Drake I began to be uncomfortably and increasingly conscious that rather than memorizing and quoting passages to uphold my particular belief, my time would have been much more profitably spent in memorizing and quoting and trying to put over to the world the real meaning of such magnificent passages as "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them."

But arguing gave us much pious satisfaction. Discussion of things on which we agreed with "rival churches" would probably not have had the same appeal to us at the time as arguing the controversial topics.

As a rule, everything went along quite smoothly within our church. Being so close to Drake, we were in a most strategic position geographically for selecting ministers of high type. During this period our church grew and flourished. Our family stood en masse behind the minister in his efforts. There was one notable exception.

At one time the congregation was split asunder over a minister. One faction wanted to keep him, another wanted him to move on. The difference of opinion developed into a serious quarrel, which resulted in the unlawful "excommunication" of my father and a prominent and tireless woman worker in the church. I don't remember what the lady was supposed to have done, but my father was accused of having made a bet with some one. The Tripp family withdrew from the church.

We were lost without the church. The first Sunday after our withdrawal we were restless and uneasy. We didn't know what to do with ourselves. Father wandered about silently, doing first one job and then another. Once I found him pacing the floor in deep thought. I wandered to the piano and played the hymn book through. Mother came in to listen. I saw her furtively wiping the tears away. I wondered what my Sunday School class would do without me, and who would play the piano. No one seemed inclined to talk at dinner. Even the boys were silent.

When evening came it seemed there was nothing to do but find a book and read. In my mind's eye I would see all my friends gathered in Christian Endeavor, discussing vital and interesting problems. Later, with my mind's "ear" I could hear them all singing the stirring anthem we had practiced for many weeks. It was a long day.

At a family dinner conference later in the week, we decided that we would attend the Methodist Church thereafter. Here we found the people cordial, but we never felt at home. Their ways were different and we didn't seem essential. We didn't "belong."

The minister who had been the bone of contention finally resigned and our congregation sent a delegation to ask us to return. The man who, at the board meeting, had given the damaging testimony against my father, admitted he might have been mistaken, and, under a new minister, all was satisfactorily smoothed out.

With what difficulty do people learn to live and work together in democratic institutions!

CHAPTER XXIII

We Liked Our Epworth League Assembly

The Methodist Church sponsored an annual event in which the whole town co-operated. We forgot our religious differences for this period. Young and old, members of all churches and members of none, looked forward to the State Epworth League Assembly.

The church had leased a plot of ground on a wooded bluff overlooking the Skunk River and about a mile east of the city. Here the organization erected an auditorium, and here every summer was held its state meeting, combined with a regular chautauqua course. Crowds of people planned to come to Colfax each year for this affair, if not for the whole week, at least for a day or two.

We waked up one morning and there, on the Epworth League Grounds, a tent city was being erected. Stakes were being driven, hammers resounded, people were walking to hydrants for pails of water, women were arranging beds and stoves and cupboards, tables and chairs. Children were playing croquet or skipping the rope, or just milling around. Friends of other years were meeting and exchanging words of greeting and welcome. Small stores were opening up. A committee of women was busy arranging and equipping the dining room. Delivery wagons were hustling through the grounds unloading their wares. Hacks were shuttling back and forth from Colfax transporting crowds of towns people and people who had arrived on the train and interurban.

All sorts of loaded vehicles were arriving. There were surreys, phaetons, top buggies, both single and double, wagons. These were unloading their cargoes of people and other impedimenta and "parking" in an area provided just outside the grounds. Part of the "parking" process was to unharness the team of horses, slip on halters and tie each horse securely to a convenient tree. This finished, with a pat of assurance to the often skittish animals, the driver made his way to the grounds.

If he had left a car parked thus, the driver's obligation for its care would have been accomplished. He could have left it so for several days. No driving--no gas or oils required. Not so with his team. Before he had started from home, he had seen to it that he had provided sufficient corn and oats to satisfy the horses until he returned again. Two or three times a day he must remember to repair to the parking lot to feed and water his horses. If he should stay at the grounds for several days, he must see that they be taken out and exercised.

The assembly furnished a most thrilling upset to the town's usual tranquility. Here we had opportunity to meet congenial people from various communities. We had a chance to renew our acquaintance with them at the League the next year, and the next, and the next.

Here also we heard some of the outstanding men of the times. There was William Jennings Bryan, dynamic Bob LaFollette from Wisconsin; Gypsy Smith; Russell Conwell of "Acres of Diamonds" fame. There were musical treats, including concerts by the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra.

It was here I saw my first movie, pictures of the Passion Play at Oberammergau. To us this was an amazing spectacle. Some of the speeches I heard here made a tremendous impression upon me.

To appreciate what this meeting meant to us, one must recollect that it wasn't easy in those days to get in touch with the world outside our own communities except through books and newspapers. There were no radios. There were no movies. There were no automobiles, and there was, for most of us, little money for traveling. To have some of the best from the world outside our small community come to our very doors constituted a real and inspiring event.

Of course, one would have to admit that for us youngsters, the inspirational and educational and spiritual part of the project were probably, at the time, not of first importance. We sometimes preferred to skip the lectures and substitute a walk in the park with boy or girl friends whom we had not seen for some time, or take a walking trip to the Old Mineral Springs whose grounds adjoined the League

Grounds on the east, or a trip to Lover's Leap. But we did attend the outstanding lectures and programs, and we absorbed a considerable amount of cultural value from them.

The Epworth League Assembly is an institution which has passed out of the picture, crowded out by the press of a multiplicity of other modern activities. The grounds finally reverted to the city and were sold to private individuals. The auditorium was razed.

One views the tranquil scene with a slight lump in his throat. However, the League flourished when it was needed most. Though physical evidence of the teeming activity which prevailed there has disappeared, there is little doubt that the lives of a generation of people were made richer through its sessions.

CHAPTER XXIV

Were We Educated?

Before I was through the grades I could diagram sentences, usually getting all the little slanting lines in exactly the right spots and surmounting the various lines with the correct words. I could name every bone in the body, beginning with "frontal, parietal, temporal, occipital," and ending with "femur, tibia, fibula, carpal, metacarpal and phalanges."

I could tell about the corpuscles and plasma of the blood, and trace the blood on its journey through the body, but the purpose of its following this tortuous path hour after hour and year after year was never made clear to me. I did not know that it served as a remarkable transportation system to distribute the precious energy giving oxygen to the tissues of the body.

I knew all about how to compute Ann's age if she were one half as old as Jane, and if the sum of their ages was fifteen. I was fully prepared to find the dimensions of any cube I might encounter, if I knew the cubic contents. I could compute the cost of papering and carpeting my house from top to bottom. I could divide seven miles, two feet and five inches by fifteen and usually obtain the correct answer.

I rarely missed in spelling "bureau," or "homeopathy," or "chemise." I could give a complete recitation on the capitals of practically all the countries of the world, including Ecuador and Afghanistan. I could name all the townships in my county in order, and I was able to name and describe all the battles in which the United States had engaged.

All this I accomplished by hours and months and years of study and drill, but at what price! I never had any music training, except for private lessons at home. I didn't have art. I didn't have manual training.

I learned nothing of the chemistry of food, nothing of the important laws of habit formation, of the perils attending installment buying, of the meaning and advantages of budgeting. Nothing was ever said about the question of effective dealing with one's next door neighbor, nor of his neighbor on the other side of the world. The training for worthy home membership and general citizenship was left to chance.

In a very few classes do I remember being asked my opinion of any problem of importance to me or to my classmates. Of course not. In that day the teacher knew all the answers, so why hear our novitiate opinions? We didn't discuss. We recited what we had read in a book.

Little attempt was made to relate what we read to what we saw about us. I had to go to a University before I discovered that the events of history had any bearing at all on the things that were transpiring in the current world. At college, too, I was surprised to learn that a work of Shakespeare was something to admire and enjoy, rather than a collection of unfamiliar words of which I was supposed laboriously and painstakingly to find the meanings.

That we learn all of the things we did was considered of utmost importance at the time. It took all of this to be "educated." But, somehow in spite of the hours I spent mastering all this material, I have never seemed to find it very

useful. I never seemed to find occasion for talking about my tibia and fibula. I have never maintained any interest in Ann's age as compared with others of her family and friends, and I never yet have met a cube that seemed to demand that I find one side. We never had a bureau in our house. It has always been a dresser or a dressing table or a chest, so knowing the respective order in which all of those "u's" and "a's" and "e's" properly occur has been of small concern. No one of my acquaintance has worn a chemise for years. Whether the word begins with "ch" or "sh", or ends unexpectedly in "se" is not of major importance. I lived outside of Jasper County for years, so it became immaterial to me as to the respective names and positions of the townships, Clear Creek, Independence, Malaka, Mariposa, Hickory Grove in the north, and so on in precise and unchangeable order to Elk Creek and Lynn Grove in the south east corner of the county.

I feel that the majority of our teachers were rather high class individuals, with quite outstanding personalities. I thought at the time that they did a good job of teaching, but thirty years later I discovered from my study of psychology and modern pedagogy that their philosophy and practice of teaching were questionable. I made the shocking discovery that I hadn't been "developed." The more I studied, the more I was convinced that I couldn't have been, for my books and teachers of that later day said that education of a child should be accomplished in much the same manner that a plant is nurtured.

According to what I learned, each plant is an individual throwing out shoots and leaves and developing flowers and fruit characteristic of qualities predetermined and resident in the seed itself. A good gardener plans merely to provide suitable environment in which the development and growth can most effectively be accomplished. So he sees to it that the seed is planted in good rich soil, that the plant receives the proper amount of sunshine and rain, that it is protected from too severe onslaughts of wind and flood. If he sees a plant growing crooked, he carefully pulls it to place and braces it up. He prunes it here and there to make a shapely plant. He picks off some of the buds to produce more beautiful blossoms or more luscious fruit.

"The gardener," said my teacher of that later date, "realizes that every plant will have to have its own individual treatment and follow its own particular bent. He knows that cucumbers must be provided with more water than cacti, that corn will stand upright, but that his tomatoes will no doubt have to be provided with stakes. If he wishes sweet, luscious, red water melons which break open with a ripping sound, he realizes he must select a sandy soil in which to plant his seed."

"Having thus provided suitable environment and effective restraints," continued my teacher, "the gardener with a green thumb sits back and lets his plants develop in its own way. He doesn't slap the cucumbers down because the vines insist on sprawling on the ground, and he doesn't stand the tomatoes in the corner because their fruit is slower in developing than are his radishes."

In looking back over my school history at that later date, I realized that there was little evidence to show that my childhood teachers thought of me as similar to a plant. The intellectual sunshine and rain and soil that was my environment was often of poor quality. If I showed tendencies of growing crooked, I was often snatched to perpendicular in none too gentle manner. Pruning was often done in the same rough shod manner. The buds I put forth were picked off without much consideration as to whether I had any of my own particular brand of buds left to produce my special kind of beautiful flowers and fruit. Least of all did my teachers sit back and permit me to develop in my own way.

No, I could see, as the books said, that most of my teachers instead of seeing us as organisms to be developed, had considered us as vessels to be filled with information from without, and that they had pretty much attempted to squeeze the same amount and quality of material into each "vessel," regardless of individual interests and capacities. I could see that much of the material used in "pouring in" or filling me and my classmates up was composed of an assortment of odds and ends of information of little practical or cultural value, material gleaned from the field of experts and crammed into us "vessels" before we were interested in it or able to understand it.

The less responsive "vessels" had gradually given up the struggle and dropped

out of school. I remembered that of thirty children who entered high school as freshmen in my class, only seven had persisted to the end, become "filled," and graduated as seniors. From the modern point of view, I could see that a casualty list of seventy six per cent in four years of educational endeavor seemed unnecessarily heavy.

The failure in that early day to realize the significance of the fact that I was different from John and that John was not at all like Jane, led, I could now understand, to punishments that must have been quite heart breaking to the Johns and Janes who could not master the various, unvarying subjects of the curriculum. I remembered how bad I felt when these people were publicly scolded by the instructors, when they were compelled to stay after school to make up work, when they were given failing grades which they carried home with fear and trembling, anticipating the berating they would in all probability have to undergo at home.

Sometimes the slow children were whipped. They were failed year after year. A big eighth grade boy might find himself spending his day with small children in the third and fourth grades, far removed from boys and girls of his own age. I did not need my psychology teachers to point out the fact that this treatment could without doubt cause grave and disastrous effects on the character development of the "victim," making him a fit subject to be psycho analyzed in later years.

I must, however, in justice, say in defense of the old system that by means of hours of formal and sometimes tiresome drills, we did learn the three r's, readin', 'ritin' and 'rithmetic, to say nothing of the three s's, speakin', spellin' and sipherin'.

Those teachers of the early day, even if they had vision, a green thumb as it were with regard to children's nurture, could have done little about it. Any material change in the curriculum or methods would no doubt have heaped upon the heads of the offending instructors severe condemnation of citizens and officials.

I must insist that under severe handicaps those teachers taught what was laid out for them conscientiously and well. They carried a terrific and impossible load. As I remember it, when we were in high school, we had only three teachers to conduct twenty classes. One of these teachers was the superintendent who managed all the administrative work of the school in addition to his teaching load.

The teaching of our superintendent stands out in my mind. Apparently he felt free to do a little more informal teaching than did the other teachers. In the economics classes he would at times go far afield from the lesson in the text book and discuss with us interesting side lights gleaned from his everyday living and experience. We sat open mouthed as he talked about the tariff problem, the law of supply and demand, of inflation and deflation. We hungered for more of the same kind of discussion.

In one respect the city was forward looking from an educational stand point. At the time the old school house reached and exceeded the saturation point, our sixth grade was provisionally installed in a room down town. It was while I was here that I discovered the city library. When a girl friend said, "Come on, let's get a book at the library," she ushered me into a stuffy, crowded room which to me proved to be a fine new world. How wonderful to be able to borrow all the books I wanted to read! I read and read, but now I see that my choice of books could have been improved upon if my teachers or the librarian had had time to take a little pains to assist me. I had just as well have selected a sprinkling of Dickens or Scott with my Alcott and Elsie Dinsmore.

CHAPTER XXV

Our Toes To The Mark

I suppose we got the most important part of our education at home. Father and Mother had their own ideas with regard to the kind of home they should maintain for us. They seemed to follow the spirit of Mother's maxim about "precepts upon precepts," and added another which expressed the same thought with regard to example. After setting the example, they fully intended we should fall in line and follow it.

Thus we grew up in a home free from profanity. Mother told me confidentially once that when she and Father were first married, Father swore quite eloquently. When the children began to arrive, she asked him to stop and he complied with her wishes. He did retain a few choice expletives that we children were not supposed to hear, which he used on rare occasions. But using the Lord's name "in vain" in our family was absolutely taboo along with such expressions as "Damn" and "Hell." Only the minister knew how to use those words properly.

On one occasion Father forgot. He was describing a man and said, "Why, he was so mean he would have to climb a ladder to get to hell." We looked at Mother in shocked surprise. We wondered just what she would do with Father. But after a few minutes she laughed and then the rest of us were free to laugh too. Father did not have to go to his room.

But Father never seemed to feel his style was cramped by the family language restrictions. He could make "By the eternal" sound most ominous, and apparently such terms with proper emphasis served effectively to relieve his pent up wrath.

I rarely heard my brothers swear. How Mother accomplished this with five live-wire boys is now a mystery to me.

Mother did not like to hear any of us say, "Darn" or "Gee Whizz" or "Golly" or "Gosh." She said the Bible said, "Let your speech be as 'Yea, Yea, and Nay, Nay.'" Though she did not make an issue of our use of these comparatively harmless "bywords," she didn't consider them very elegant expressions, and never agreed that they added to the effectiveness of our speech. She never permitted us to call one another "Fools." That was a grievous restriction, for so often that was the only term I could think of that fully expressed my utter contempt for one of my siblings.

But Mother said, "Whosoever shall call his brother a fool shall be in danger of hell fire." I didn't want to risk that dire punishment. I tried the word out on Leo once, knowing full well that she was a sister, not a brother. Then Mother informed me that the word "Brother" used in that sense meant "Sister" too, not only sister, but anyone else in the world, so I had to delete that expressive word from my vocabulary along with "Liar," which was also taboo.

Mother, herself, had one or two shocking expletives which slipped out on extremely rare occasions. These expressions of hers sent us into gales of laughter. Her favorite word for ordinary occasions were, "Oh, Pshaw," or, "Oh, Dear!," or "Shoot," more or less explosive and emphatic according to the urgency of the occasion. One of the small grandsons once heard her say, "Oh, Granny" in her most violent style. He went laughing to his mother and said, "Gee, Mother, Grandma is getting tough."

The younger grandchildren in later years never seemed to know just what the status of their grandmother was, or just how she should be treated. She was so little and so taken care of by that time that they apparently couldn't decide whether to consider her another child or a sort of glorified Mother Emeritus. One of the children of his own accord called her "Little Mother."

At one time Mother was sunning herself on the porch when one of the three year old twins came out laden with cookies and apples, and impudently informed Mother that they had planned a party for the porch and that she wasn't invited. Mother laughed and obligingly withdrew. The twins could do no wrong. Grandchildren were different from what we had been.

We did not have drinking in our home. Mother was very strict with regard to this in her own opinions and practices. She even used spices very sparingly, fearing that the highly seasoned food would lead her boys to acquire a taste for alcohol. As for seasoning with rum or brandy or wine, that was unthinkable. In accordance with the practices of the day, a bottle of whiskey was kept on hand to be used sparingly in cases of snake bites and certain other ailments, but never as a beverage. It just wasn't worth it. Mother said we could be happy without it and she didn't want to take even one chance in a thousand that her boys would develop the drink habit.

Drinking alcoholic beverage in our community in that day offered no partic-

ular problem as compared to later periods. Most of the time that I was growing up, Iowa prohibited the sale of alcoholic drinks for beverages in any form. In spite of a certain amount of circumvention of the law, a generation grew up practically unfamiliar with the taste of alcohol. There was some bootlegging, but places that indulged in this sort of thing were, as a rule, only patronized by the riff-raff of the community. Drug stores received permits to sell liquor for medicinal purposes and often interpreted the term "medicinal" quite liberally. Occasionally some of our boys procured a bottle of beer, drank it, and felt that they had had a "grand spree." But such things were in general frowned upon by the respectable and decent people of the town. As a rule, if a boy appeared at our dances with liquor on his breath, he became a wall flower, as the respectable girls refused to dance with him. The liquor business could not be very flourishing under those conditions.

I early developed the conviction that the practice of using alcohol as a beverage had not a "leg to stand on." Some years later, I gradually became cognizant of the fact that by being an abstainer I was getting decidedly out of step with the "Jones's." I like to go along with that family. Everything else being equal, it makes for a happier situation all around, so I decided to do some research work to prove to myself that the convictions I had acquired in that early day were antedated.

Alas! A Study of science and psychology and sociology, philosophy, physiology, ethics, religion, and logic, failed in my mind, to provide for the necessary and adequate legs to support the drinking practice. My problem was then to decide whether to let the "Jones's" go on without me, and stay by my convictions, or to forsake my convictions and go along with the crowd.

I tried to rationalize. Many of the "Jones's" seemed to be able to use that procedure to their own satisfaction, but even my cleverest arguments failed to convince me. In the end I had to stay by my tiresome convictions, and I had to continue to face all my social situations on my own steam without assistance from the social crutch alcohol is presumed to furnish.

It was most disconcerting. However, I have found that there have been some compensations. From the proceeds of my abstinence, I glimpsed Europe while it was still unspoiled and untrammeled, and I have been spared the bother of giving any thought to learning how to "hold my liquor."

We had no gambling in our home, and little in the community. My father was far too careful of his money to waste it in gambling. Besides, he considered it a demoralizing practice. He even frowned upon betting in any form and refused to practice betting himself. It was against the family rules for the boys to play marbles "for keeps," though if the truth were known, I fear the young rascals did transgress that rule to some extent.

Father wanted us to be honest. He believed that any business transaction should be advantageous to both sides, to the party of the first part, and to the party of the second part. If he sold anything, he felt there should be a frank delineation of the excellencies of the product and an equally frank admission as to its deficiencies.

"By following this practice," he said, "I will never need to turn my head when I meet the men I have dealt with on the street." He paid his just debts and expected us to do likewise.

He said, "I may never leave you a great deal of money, but at least I hope when I die, I can bequeath a good credit to the family." At that time we were inclined to think that if we were given the privilege of choice, we would have voted in favor of the money bequest.

Father had profound respect for the law. It was his theory that we must follow the rules of the game. He would not cheat in this larger game any more than he would cheat at a game of whist. Whether we liked a law or not, it was up to us to obey it. Didn't we have the privilege of electing our officials? To disobey was not the way to get rid of a distasteful law. To accomplish this, we should put pressure on the officials to rescind the law, or failing success in this, we should oust the offenders and elect others in their places.

He would say, "Any other course than obedience to law will lead to anarchy and confusions. For each individual to select the laws he chooses to obey can only lead to the downfall of the democracy." "I hope," he said, "none of my children will ever have a court record."

So now, since that was what Father thought, we must learn not to disobey laws, or lie, or cheat, or steal. We learned the little ditty, "'Tis a sin to steal a pin, 'tis a greater to steal a tater." Sometimes when we felt no one else would know, we were sorely tempted to tell a little white lie, or break a very tiny law, or cheat a wee bit in a game; but if we did, we didn't feel very good about it, for Father had said that it didn't matter whether anyone else knew about the wrong things we did or not. "The important thing," he said, "is to maintain your self-respect, to be able to think highly of yourself." "In this world," he said, "it is a constant fight to keep from slipping back to the practices of the average individual." It was sometimes quite a nuisance to have a parent with such notions.

Father had the old-fashioned belief that it was up to the people of the community to maintain conditions which would make it easy for children to grow up in sobriety and integrity and become law-abiding citizens. "Children are more important than adults," he said. Mother concurred with him. We felt temporarily set up at this time. At other times we felt both of them had peculiar ways of showing their exalted opinion of us--by being tough on us.

We had to learn from Mother for instance that dishwater was good for burns. I am inclined to believe doctors are still unaware of that fact. Once I told Mother how I hated to wash dishes.

"That's fine," she said, "You should wash them until you like to do that better than anything else."

I looked at her with questioning, incredulous eyes, but she soberly went ahead mixing the huge pan of bread dough and I could see that she wasn't joking.

Father had his own ideas about the distribution of money from the family exchequer. He was distinctly the "chief bursar."

Money was made a scarce article at our house. During the first years of my father's struggle to make a place for himself, the need for this scarcity was no doubt actual. I have more than a slight suspicion that, as the years went by, the necessity disappeared, but the situation continued. I am inclined to believe that my father considered it a wholesome tradition to maintain that we had little more than enough money to keep the proverbial wolf from the door. We were in various ways made to feel that we were pretty hard pressed financially. We were impressed with the fact that frills and furbelows were pretty much taboo for us.

We never had spending money to jingle in our pockets. Money was always doled out to us for specific, and from Father's and Mother's point of view, legitimate purposes. At times, we felt keenly that they had an unnecessarily circumscribed idea of the word "legitimate."

At rare intervals, we could, by using our more persuasive powers, inveigle Mother into parting with a penny or nickle for "illegitimate" purposes, such as purchasing a few sticks of candy, scrolled glamorously with red and white stripes. Arle and Leo even had the temerity to approach Father in his office to ask for candy money. The young upstarts reported that this procedure, much to their surprise, worked like a charm. Their request was seldom refused, no questions asked. Probably they struck Father at times when he was in one of his "absent" moments. "Give me a nickel" may have registered some place in a center along his spinal cord, and set off automatically the response of reaching into his pocket and producing the coin, while his brain continued to deliberated on the problem of briefing his argument for the important law suit just ahead.

According to some present day psychologists, my parents' practice with regard to denying us spending money was questionable. We might have developed habits of stealing and cheating, but we didn't. There was always that "self esteem" we had to maintain.

In retrospect, I can see that the things we really needed seemed somehow

to be forthcoming. Father appeared to keep his eyes open and to be on the alert for things that counted in our educational or physical development. There was, for example, the small sized bicycle Father bought for me because he thought it would develop me physically. For once I had become the envy of the small fry of the town.

So we went without "gim cracks" and spending money. Sometimes we felt abused. In later years I have come to realize what it would have meant to the family exchequer to have allowed each one of the eight even twenty-five cents a week for spending money. Two dollars a week, eight or ten dollars a month, was, I suppose, sufficient to have fed two individuals in that day.

I always felt a little sorry for Mother as "assistant bursar." In keeping with the general practice of the time, she had to ask for money too. I could see that she disliked to ask. Father, I am sure, as with other good men of his day, failed to realize that the arrangement was at all embarrassing or humiliating, for in later years, when because of Mother's illness, it became necessary for us girls to take charge of the household, we asked him for our own check book, and it was given to us without protest. But by that period times were changing.

Such a poky family life! With no drinking, no gambling, no swearing, our "self esteem" to maintain by not indulging in lying, or stealing, or cheating, or law breaking even in the smallest degree, with no spending money to jingle in our pockets, life must have been quite colorless and uninteresting, but that all represented Father's and Mother's "body of tenets." It was up to us to abide by them. It didn't occur to us to question them very much.

CHAPTER XXVI

Conflicts and Contentions

I did not get to be very old before I came to the conclusion that ours was a world of conflict. It seemed there was always something boiling over. I began to wonder if there ever would be a time when one could sit back with a sigh of relief, secure in the belief that all problems were solved and that henceforth differences of opinion would not arise to disturb and agitate and fret the populace.

As I became older, I spoke to Father about this.

He said, "Yes, Grace, there will always be conflicts. The trouble is people don't use judgment. The world would be better off if people argued less over non-essentials and spent more time in discussing things that matter." "All we can hope for," he went on, "is that our differences will in time be resolved with more sanity." I questioned him further as to what he meant.

"Well," he said, "in the first place, we must become more intelligent and better informed so that we may have reasons for our opinions, and not go off at 'half cock' as so many people do." "One first class studied statement," he went on, "is better than a whole ton of biased opinions based on hear-say, with no thought or study."

As I thought this over, I said to myself, "Going off 'half cocked' is exactly what I have done in the past and what I am still doing. I will try to correct that tendency."

"Then," my father continued, "we must learn to be tolerant of other people's beliefs, and develop the ability to discuss a proposition impersonally and without getting angry. The issues are rarely so important as they seem at the moment, anyway."

That was something to think about for days and years. I pondered over his statement in relation to the quarrels we youngsters had indulged in during our childhood. I thought of his bit of philosophy with regard to our community :quabbles. Years later, I thought to myself, "If we could apply my father's observations to discussion of national disputes, it is likely we would never need to resort to a "shooting war." It is a simple formula in the statement, but apparently most difficult to carry into practice.

We had plenty of conflict in our small community, some of local origin, such as the school site struggle, and others of national import. Both types were town-shaking affairs.

At times our citizens found themselves at logger heads with big business. When its representatives tried to be high-handed with us, we showed them that we didn't propose to take their impositions. There was, for instance, the switch track battle. Our "stand pipe," seventy feet high, was located at the top of Sid Williams Hill, which itself towered several hundred feet above the business section of the town. The city fathers had thus seen to it that not a house in town would suffer for lack of water pressure.

This tremendous force was brought into play in a most amusing and effective manner at one time in the town's history. The interurban electric company was putting in a service line from Des Moines to Colfax. The people of the town were very happy to have this service instituted, but they did object strenuously to having the company install a switch track across a main highway leading into town from the north. This the company was determined to do. Injunction proceedings were instituted, but while these were pending, the company impudently began to lay the tracks across the highway.

A council of war was held by a group of citizens. The subject under discussion was "How can this outrage be prevented?" Various suggestions were made, discussed and dismissed.

Finally, one member of the group had a real inspiration, which was immediately accepted and carried into effect. The city fire hose was brought into service.

That afternoon, the railway workers were mystified to see the hose being coupled to a water plug in their vicinity. They looked around for indications of a fire, but saw no smoke or evidence of a blaze. They lost interest and continued with their work, only to be caught napping and to be forcibly overturned the next moment by an invincible stream of water from the hose. Building the track was their job and they made a valiant effort to continue the work. All to no avail! Each time a man picked himself up and started for his tools, the stream of water was turned in his direction and he suddenly found himself stretched out on the ground. The work was of necessity halted. In due time the processes of the law denied the company the privilege of building their tracks in that particular place.

I think my father chuckled all the way home after seeing this incident. When he told us of it, he could scarcely get on with the story for laughing. I am not sure whether he had anything to do with planning the campaign, or not. He never told us.

Political conflicts in those days were intense. Campaigns were waged with much bitter fury. People were Democrats or Republicans, or, for short intervals, Populist or Greenbackers. I don't believe there were any Independents.

Even we youngsters were imbued with the crusading spirit which inspired us to show forth in no uncertain terms the faith that was within us. Without knowing for sure what the terms meant, if our fathers were for "free coinage of silver at the ratio of sixteen to one," we took up the cudgel for Bryan and wielded it with little concern for opinions of those who believed in a "sound conservative gold standard."

When a Republican or Democratic rally was held, it was without a doubt a tumultuous and violent community affair of the first magnitude. Everyone turned out. There were speeches and parades, horn tooting and drum beating. The populace let down its collective community hair.

The Democrats, having been in the minority in Iowa, were forced to plan to make extra noise per individual to make up for the scarcity in numbers. The eleven Tripps proved a great asset to the party in this respect. Noise making was one of the most highly developed accomplishments of at least eight of them. To indulge in noise in a good cause suited their desires exactly.

The campaign of 1896 is the one I remember best. I think it was the wildest. The Democrats carried canes and had torch light parades. In Iowa some towns varied the procedure by having canary staff parades. The Republicans were orderly

hats and five dollar McKinley suits.

The papers were full of political propaganda. The democratic state platform for that year, discussing the principles of bi-metalism, says, "We recognize the fact that upon this question the country has reached a crisis that can no longer be postponed or evaded. We know that the result of this conflict must be a return to the money of the constitution, or the substitution therefor, for all time to come, of a standard of values, which, born of British aristocratic greed, doubles the purchasing power of money and reduces by one-half the price of all great staples of industry."

An extract from Republican resolutions passed June 26, 1896, at St. Louis, say, "We are unalterably opposed to every measure calculated to debase our currency or impair the credit of our country. We are therefore opposed to the free coinage of silver except by international agreement with the leading commercial nations of the world * * * * * and until such agreement can be obtained, the existing gold standard must be preserved. * * * * * Protection and reciprocity are twin measures of the Republican policy and go hand in hand. Democratic rule has recklessly struck down both and both must be re-established."

I do not remember the campaign of 1890, but I was told by my father it was a fierce one too. The democrats were objecting to the McKinley tariff. They used the tariff on tin ware as a symbol of the disastrous effects such tariffs were apt to produce. Their orators carried kits of tin ware which they dangled and rattled before their audiences. They loudly proclaimed that the Republicans were proposing to tax the American consumer for the benefit of the American millionaire. With tears in their eyes, they suggested that tin cups would ultimately become so expensive we would have to return to gourds for drinking vessels. They could not envisage the age when the tin cup would become a rare and little prized article in the American economy.

There were other political upheavals in the state and nation, repercussions of which reached our town.

At one time in the spring of 1894 word was spread that an army was due to pass through Colfax within a few days, a branch of Coxey's Army. We had been hearing of its progress, and knew it was not a fast stepping, uniformed, shooting army, but a miserable army in rags, born of the depression. But having any army pass through town was something to look forward to.

As to our family, Father had managed to solve the most desperate phase of the depression by moving to town and launching himself in a new profession, but for the country as a whole, the picture darkened. Farmers of Iowa violently objected to the fact that they must sell potatoes at ten cents a bushel, eggs at six cents a dozen, hogs at \$2.50 a head.

New parties arose. It was during this time that a man who later became one of Jasper County's most famous citizens, became prominent in national affairs. General James B. Weaver co-operated with others in forming the Populist Party, pledged to right the wrongs of the common man. In 1892, General Weaver was a candidate for president on the Populist ticket, and, amazingly, he received over a million votes, thus winning twenty-two votes in the electoral college, those from Kansas, Colorado and Nebraska. Twelve years before, Mr. Weaver had secured 300,000 votes as head of the "Greenback" ticket, organized for the same purpose as the Populist party.

General Weaver, as I remember him, was a grand old man, deserving of more honorable remembrance than he receives today. I well remember his scholarly, kindly bearing as he passed our house daily from his modest home at the top of the hill, on his way to the office. He often stopped to talk to us children. He encouraged us to further our education. When he died, I found myself dissolved in tears, but, proud when one of his daughters said, "Oh, Grace, Father loved you."

The government at Washington, held its difficulties in dealing with the discontent of this depressed period, over 100,000,000 threatening the country to a standstill. The development of social problems, labor and immigration.

ple, particularly those of the mid-west. Coxey's Army was a spectacular symbol of the country's unrest. The main branch of this amazing army was assembled in Massillon, Ohio, under the leadership of a man named Coxey, a person of some means, but one who had interested himself in the sufferings of the common people. For months before the march, Coxey had announced that on Easter Sunday an army 2000 strong would start from Massillon and other points to march to Washington.

There on the White House lawn, they would petition President Cleveland to arrange that bonds worth \$500,000.00 be sold to finance highway improvement, for the purpose of furnishing work for the hordes of the unemployed.

Nobody took Coxey's announcement very seriously, since there was little evidence of such an army in the making. Amazingly enough, at the appointed time, Carl Browne, Coxey's lieutenant, appeared on his horse in his colorful regalia, an incipient "army" of a hundred men in rags, many without shoes, miraculously appeared on the scenes, and with Coxey and Browne at the head, accompanied by fifty news reporters, they moved out toward the East.

At about the same time, several similar bands from different parts of the country began to move toward the same goal. The branch which we heard most about was Kelley's Army. It had had its inception in San Francisco. The army had in some way secured transportation as far as Council Bluffs, Iowa, in freight cars, but here the railroads refused to carry them farther. They must proceed on foot.

To add to their difficulties, at this gate-way city of Iowa, this derelict army encountered a belligerent and unfriendly government. The state militia was sent to the Bluff City to prevent the soldiers' march across the state. Commander Kelley was astute. He instructed his men to fall on their knees and to sing and pray. The militia members were non-plussed. They could not muster the courage to restrain a horde of men who were singing and praying, and the army was permitted to continue on its way. Jack London, the famous writer, was a member of the army.

General Weaver had organized what he called the People's Party. From this party a political club was selected to welcome the so-called intruders.

The army marched on from Council Bluffs one hundred fifty miles to Des Moines. Here the city officials forbade the playing of the army's band and permitted only one stopping place, on the eastern outskirts of the city. But despite the official restrictions and the fact that the army proceeded in a drizzling rain with "General" Kelley and General Weaver heading the procession, it managed to march through the city. As people watched, many wept tears of sympathy, and prayers were offered up for the ultimate well-being of its members.

But by this time the individuals making up the army had about reached the limit of their endurance. Hungry and desperately weary, many refused to go farther on their sore and bleeding feet. There were no prayers now, but much profanity.

A hundred thirty-four mud scows were constructed to transport the men down the Des Moines River. More difficulties were encountered. The river was at a low water mark, causing many of the scows to be stranded. The army thus soon began to disintegrate. Few of the "soldiers" ever succeeded in reaching the mouth of the Des Moines River. Fewer still reached St. Louis. Only a very few of Kelley's army reached Washington to unite with Coxey's group.

Altogether, in all the sections of the army, of the two thousand who set their faces toward the East, less than five hundred endured to the end, arriving at Washington on May Day, 1894. The police attempted to prevent their access to the White House grounds. A few eluded the vigilance of these officers, but their efforts were fruitless. The president refused to see them. A few encamped on the east plaza of the capitol and attempted to speak on the capitol steps, but the leaders were arrested for "carrying banners and walking on the grass." The miserable army was finally dissipated without accomplishing its purpose.

The District of Columbia "graciously" bought fares to return the men to their homes. Thus ended in failure what was probably one of the first bids for what years later was realized for a time in W. C. W., a government works project, it failed.

to furnish employment and a temporary means of livelihood for thousands who could not find work.

But as we children of Colfax watched for the army to appear, we did not know this tragic story. We only knew we were disappointed to hear the army had taken to the river and turned south at Des Moines. We had missed the excitement of seeing it pass through our town by twenty-three miles.

The time came three years later when we did have shooting soldiers around, though not very many and not for long. When Spain presumably sank the Maine in Havana Harbor we were all "hopping mad." We hadn't learned yet that even after such a serious incident as the sinking of a ship, there are other ways of settling difficulties between nations than going to war. I think it had not even begun to dawn on us at that time that we lived in One World. We had a slogan that was repeated again and again to insure that we maintain our trigger fingers. The slogan was, "Remember the Maine."

We sprang to arms, determined to punish the audacious offender, and we did so in a summary manner. The National Guard Units were mustered in for intensive training. These units consisted of volunteer peace time companies which had been organized and trained in various cities and towns as State Militia. They were supplemented by other volunteers and thus they formed the nucleus for full war time companies.

Most of the men never saw service as the war was over too soon. Young handsome Lieutenant Hobson led a volunteer group aboard vessels which were sunk in the strait at Havana, bottling up Cervera's fleet in the harbor. Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders went ashore, fought their way up San Juan Hill and captured the fort. Admiral Dewey defeated the Spanish Fleet in Manila Harbor, and the war was over a few short months after it had begun.

Hobson returned and was showered with kisses by all the girls who could get within osculatory reach. We girls all regretted that he did not appear at Colfax.

As the smoke of battle cleared away, we found ourselves as a nation, more or less responsible for the welfare of the Philippines, Cuba and other islands.

The war had not affected most of us enough personally to give us a foretaste of what war could mean. Though we did wait anxiously for news of victories, business was much as usual. We did not have to convert our industries. Our sons and brothers were not drafted. We did not have to carry ration cards or cut down on our consumption of meat or sugar or white flour or electric energy.

But even a little war is grievious. When the boys came marching home from training camps, the ranks were found to have been sadly depleted by typhoid fever and other diseases. There were heartbreaks in many homes, but we had remembered the Maine.

CHAPTER XXVII

The Melting Pot

People have been accustomed to referring to our country as a huge melting pot into which immigrants from various and sundry countries have been poured, and out of which motley array of material American citizens have evolved. Because of my early experiences and observations, I prefer to think of America as composed of thousands of small melting pots scattered hither and yon throughout the nation.

Colfax was an excellent example of such a melting pot. A rather large per cent of the population consisted of men from Wales and their families---miners who worked in our soft coal mines. As I see it now, they were sterling material for our melting pot. They were on the whole industrious, honest, thrifty, scrupulously clean, intelligent, and in general, of fine moral fabric. They were not overly clannish, but entered into the life of the community wholeheartedly.

As for us native born Americans, we never seemed to sense or imagine any fundamental difference between these recent "immigrants" and us. Welsh chil-

ren, coal miner's children, lawyers' children, merchants' children, were all the same to us, providing they came up to other standards which individual groups had established for themselves.

Besides making a general wholesome contribution to the life of the town, the Welsh people shared one thing with us which greatly enriched the life of the whole community, and of the state. They brought with them from Wales their native interest and ability in singing. Every Welsh home was a singing school. Every Welshman, it seemed, was a singer. I doubt if I have ever since been affected with music as I remember being thrilled by the Welsh male chorus as it rendered "Men of Harlock."

As one listened to these men, it was most difficult to realize that they had come up from the depths of the coal mine after a hard day's work, had scrubbed themselves up, and were now giving expression of the spiritual from within them.

The Welsh people inspired the whole community to musical endeavor. They led our choirs. They organized and trained our choruses. They and other Welsh groups throughout the state organized and conducted the "Eisteddfod," a musical contest held each year at selected places in the state. Any individual or group could enter the contest by making application. In Colfax, for several years, we entered, among other events, a sixty voice chorus, made up of high school youngsters, graying old men and women, and all ages in between. We practiced one evening a week, the winter through. We were led by various directors at different times, all Welsh and all coal miners, a Thomas, or a Brazzil, or a Jones or an Evans.

With these leaders, nothing but perfection was satisfactory. Every word, every inflection, every pianissimo, every allegro must be memorized to perfection by each of the sixty individuals. There must be no exception. And when the time came, we journeyed to Des Moines, or to Oskaloosa, or to Omaha. We sang and, amazingly, we won, in spite of the fact that our group was not made up of select voices and that we were competing with college glee clubs that were. At one time a music critic was heard to say, "They're funny looking, but they sure can sing."

It has been years since I have heard of an Eisteddfod contest. I take it that somewhere in the melting process, interest in this project sufficient to keep it functioning was lost in favor of other activities. I am glad I lived during the time when I could have the advantage of its influence. I can think of many less wholesome ways in which I could have spent all those winter evenings.

The Welsh People lost no time in adapting themselves to the melting pot sufficiently to take advantage of the opportunities democracy offered for demanding and defending what they considered their "rights." Coal mining is a gruelling task, and a dirty one. When we met the miners returning from work, they scarcely looked as if they belonged to the white race. Even their ears were filled with coal dust. Their eyes gleamed white from their smudgy features. Their clothes were grimy. Their caps were surmounted by greasy, carbon-covered oil lamps that looked like small pitchers with wicks protruding from the spouts.

The first task of the miners upon arriving home was to bathe. A Welsh home-maker always considered it of prime importance that she be at home in time to have tubs of steaming hot water ready and waiting on the stove, with fresh, clean clothes laid out for her men. If she were at some church or social gathering in the afternoon, she would say, "I must be at home in time to get the water hot for the men to bathe," and she always was. When her men folk finished their baths, there was always a good dinner waiting for them. We thought the Welsh were outstanding cooks.

At certain seasons of the year these miners scarcely saw the sun. They worked strenuously and dangerously underground for long hours and received compensation that was totally inadequate and incommensurate with the hardships they endured. And so the miners struck. They asked for an eight hour day and increase in pay. The company officials were adamant in their refusal to accede. They contended that they would not be able to make ends meet if an eight hour day were instituted. They were most incensed that the miners were audacious enough to ask for such an impossible concession.

The miners were as determined. Days lengthened into weeks and weeks into months. The company lost thousands of dollars and the miners' families underwent much hardship.

The miners themselves found what odd jobs they could. The wives took in washings. Some of the children were taken from school and put to work as waiters in the hotels, or as boot blacks or news boys. The members of the families frequented the railroad tracks and picked up pieces of coal that had fallen from the cars, with which to cook their meals and to keep themselves warm. Family food rations were cut. Savings were spent. One little Welsh woman told me recently, "With ten on the floor, it was pretty hard."

Finally the company shipped in negro miners from the south. I do not remember that before that time there was a single negro in the town. On the day of the influx, it seemed the streets were full of them. The children came to school and we met them with ill-bred, though not particularly malicious stares of curiosity. But the negro children seemed to be well behaved and we soon got accustomed to the two or three in each room. At that time, even with a strike in progress, it did not seem to produce an excessive amount of boiling indignation that our melting pot had to be conditioned to receive and assimilate another group of people, those of a different race.

After three months the company had to accede to the miners' demands. An eight hour day was instituted and a twenty per cent increase in pay was granted. The operators managed to keep the mines in operation.

An item in the Newton Journal for May 22, 1895, sounds strangely current fifty years afterward. It says, "The usual spring strikes among laborers have already sprung up and the crop promises to be very large * * * * We confess that the problem as to what will be the outcome is one too deep and intricate for us to solve."

CHAPTER XXVIII

We Claim Renown

When we children were growing up, Colfax was a big little city. It was appropriately nicknamed the "Spring City," sometimes the "Carlsbad of America," for it and its environs spouted mineral water of exceptional therapeutic quality, just slightly superior, according to chemical analysis, to the famous Carlsbad spring in Germany, and Colfax mineral water was good to the taste. Fortunately, it lacked the sulphur content which causes the unpleasant taste and odor in so many mineral waters.

At its heyday, Colfax boasted nineteen health-giving springs with nine hotels, often filled to capacity with guests seeking cures, or at least hoping for alleviation of painful symptoms from rheumatism and other distressing complaints.

Besides the "Old Mineral Springs" with its one hundred rooms, there was the Fry Hotel with equal capacity. The Fry was situated on an eleven acre tract of land within easy walking distance of the business district and was no less popular than the Old Mineral Springs. We used to walk through the grounds at the Fry in the evenings, and observe the guests in formal attire sitting on the porches or strolling around the park. There were often sounds of intriguing music and of dancing floating to us from indoors. Thus we obtained a slight glimpse of a life to which most of us were not much exposed, the life of the famous "Gay Nineties."

Other popular, but smaller and less glamorous hotels, each contained from thirty to fifty rooms. All of these hotels provided masseurs and bathrooms for men and for women. Besides the bathing facilities at the hotels, there were fountains of hot and cold mineral water from which guests were encouraged to drink gallons of the healthgiving elixir as a daily ritual. The fountains became favorite bars for congratulating and drinking and conversation. No doubt many an affair of state was settled around the fountains.

On these days I doubt not that the malady of rheumatism was sometimes cured or at least relieved incident to the fact that the patient had a good and agreeable reason for staying in one of the central city hotels. People came from

often bringing their families along. There were wondrous tales of large numbers of patients having arrived on stretchers or crutches, and returning to their homes a few weeks later sans crutches and canes. We children became accustomed to a town full of strangers. I suppose we did not know half the people we met on the street.

Colfax water flowed freely from artesian wells. Thus its benefits could be enjoyed by people in general. In the west part of town there was even a tank of the precious water, brim full and running over, for the purpose of watering horses and cows, naturally presumed not to sense the difference between the mineral water and ordinary, tasteless city water.

Babe knew the difference, so the boys said. But Babe was badly pampered and had become fastidious. She was one of the family. In our minds she was endowed with human characteristics. I think she resented the fact that we insisted that she take up her abode in the stable when the rest of us lived in the house. Her reproachful glances when we left her told us this. Anyhow, Babe practically refused to drink ordinary city water. She would touch her nose to this insipid beverage, then raise her head and shake it petulantly with a protesting snort. When she was taken to the mineral tank, she would immerse her nose in the cold, clear water and drink long draughts of it just as any normal, self-respecting horse is supposed to consume water.

Babe was a great toper of her favorite beverage. We should never have permitted her the first taste. It was quite a bother to take her a distance of four or five blocks that she might indulge herself. It was fortunate for us that we lived in Colfax, where the water ran free. If it had been necessary to bottle and transport this beverage, each of her drinks would have cost us a dollar or more. Just one of her deep, gulpy swallows would perhaps have set us back twenty-five cents.

To this and various other free flowing springs throughout the day, came a procession of towns people and travelers, laden with jugs and cans which they filled and carried away that they might enjoy the life-giving water in their own homes.

After school, the school gang often made a pilgrimage to the spring in the small park across from the Mason House, where they drank to capacity. Sometimes we went to the basement of the Ryan Hotel where spigoted tanks of hot mineral water were provided. Beer mugs were available here. We would compete to see who could consume the most mugs of water.

Four thriving bottling works bottled and shipped out plain and carbonated water. Colfax pop was known throughout the country.

The discovery of the fact that Colfax was underlaid with artesian borne mineral water was accidental and at the time a disappointing incident. What the drillers were seeking was coal. Instead, they got water. One can imagine how disgruntled they felt when, having drilled down slightly over three hundred feet, water began to spout from their drillings, and they realized that they would have to abandon the idea of mining for coal at that point.

Some among the crew must have realized that, coming from that depth, the outpouring must be good, pure water. They began to drink it, and realized immediately it was of unusual quality. Someone, Mr. Dixon, I'm told, had the foresight to send a sample to Washington, D. C., for analysis. What had promised to be a disappointing accident, proved to be the discovery of a gold mine for the community for a number of years.

Owing to all this unusual activity and wide spread renown, we youngsters thought we had good and justifiable reasons for considering that Colfax was easily the most important city in the county. We could never understand why Newton youngsters presumed to question that fact.

When we boasted of our pre-eminence, they would say contentiously, "How can you compare this little hick town with Newton?" It would take two towns the size of Colfax to make one of Newton."

"Oh, it would, would it?" we would answer. "What's siz?" It's quality

that counts. Who knows about Newton. More strangers travel in and out of Colfax in a day than Newton would see in a week."

"Is that so," they would counter, "Well, where are your factories? Remember we have a factory."

We tossed our heads in mild disdain. "Yes," we said, "a little one-horse factory that tries to make washing machines. What about our bottling works?"

"Bottling works," they sniffed, "Well, I don't suppose you know that Newton is the county seat." But we had an answer to refute all their claims to greatness. What incensed us was the fact that these Newton upstarts erroneously believed they had a retort to effectively offset each of ours.

The mineral water is still at Colfax, potent as ever, but for one reason and another, Colfax did not fulfill its promise of becoming permanently a famous spa. The Old Mineral Springs plant fell into disrepair, though at a later period it did have its "face lifted," and became a large and much more beautiful building with a Moorish architecture facade. It was re-named "The Colfax." It enjoyed a few years of its pristine popularity at this time. Thirty years later it fell into the hands of individuals who transformed it into a "swine palace," probably the most gorgeous pig pen in the world.

During the years the other hotels either burned or were transformed into apartment houses or unpretentious sanitaria. One after the other, practically all the springs were permitted to fill up, thus making the water less available for those who still believed in it and liked it. One bottling works only survives at this writing.

Colfax streets are today comparatively empty. I am convinced that meeting the trains is no more the exciting experience it used to be.

CHAPTER XXIX

Galivanting

The Tripps must have possessed a touch of gypsy blood. I have a feeling that most people of the middle west in the latter part of the nineteenth century were probably so endowed. They were restless and would not stay put. Otherwise, I suppose these people would probably have remained in the East with their more staid brothers and sisters, instead of moving steadily westward, first to Ohio, to Indiana or Michigan, to Illinois, to Iowa.

It was most natural, then, that in our family, as soon as the last child was past babyhood so that the family could be left at home with the prototype of what is now a "baby sitter" my parents should make intermittent trips here and there. First they went to the World's Fair in 1893. Their next extensive trip was to California, seven years later. On this trip they went "tourist" and took Jesse. At this time such tours were sponsored by the railroad companies. The cars provided were of the Pullman variety, but of cheaper construction than the ordinary sleepers. The seats were covered with a sort of matting instead of the more gorgeous plush.

The travelers came home from this trip laden with bright abalone shells and other curios. We listened starry-eyed while they told us of their trip.

"Cooking was fun," said Mother, "we had an alcohol stove and cooked and ate a good many meals right in our sleeping section. The porter brought a table to hook up between the seats."

"But how did you get your groceries?" we asked.

"Oh, those," Mother said, "we bought from men with small carts at station stops, and also at stop-overs."

"That was another thing," interrupted Father, "we had a schedule of stop-overs or night stops, a day at Denver, a day at Salt Lake City, several days in and around Los Angeles, several days at San Francisco."

"Did you stay at hotels in those places?" we asked excitedly.

"No," added Father, "that was what I liked about it. Our car just side-tracked for the day. At night we returned to sleep in our berths. It was just like home."

"Well," we thought, "staying at hotels would have been fun, but that was fun too."

They described the berths and how they were made up at night. Jesse told how he had to climb a ladder to get into his berth and how he rang a bell for the porter to bring the ladder when he wanted to get down again. We were entranced.

"But how did you get dressed?" we asked.

"Oh," said Jesse, "we had little rooms at the ends of the cars, one for men and one for women. There were toilets and wash bowls and big looking glasses in these rooms. It wasn't bad for Pa and me. We could dress in a jiffy, but Docia and Ma had to get up about 5:50 to avoid the rush. Women are so slow."

Docia, we were told, was the girl Jesse had found during the trip.

They told us of the interesting people who had gone with them on the trip. It seems the group was mainly composed of personnel from the county, so that the individuals were somewhat acquainted before they started from home. They were life long friends by the time the trip came to an end.

Father added up the expenses with much satisfaction, and found that he was out of pocket little more than car fares, plus a few dollars spent for souvenirs along the way.

"Do you know, Ma," he said, as he raised his eyes from his figures and tipped his chair back precariously on its two legs, "If we had gone by wagon, it would have cost us twice as much."

The next time the folks got "travel fever" was in 1904. By this time Jesse and Docia were in California. Word came that Jesse had suffered an attack of facial paralysis. It was unthinkable that Jesse should be so far away and sick without Father's seeing about it.

This time they took me, for a special reason. Their plan was meant to be a subtle strategy to remove me from the influence of "one of those boys who 'did not come up to their standard!'" I could not be sure whether I was glad or sorry to make the trip. It would be nice to see California, but still there was this "sub-standard" individual at home whom I hated to leave for so long. At the time the individual seemed more essential to my happiness than a trip to California.

Anyhow, their fine scheme failed to work out. It was part of the strategy to leave me in California for a while, but as time drew near for Father and Mother to start for home, after much discussion and persuasion on my father's part, Jesse and Docia decided to return to Iowa. It had been hard for my father to be reconciled to the idea of one of his flock's establishing himself in such a distant land.

Though I spent much of my time in nostalgic reveries while in California, I remember a few high spots of the trip. I was much impressed when our whole train ran onto the ferry at Oakland and we were transported bag and baggage across the strait to San Francisco. I remember nearly "freezing" in my summer clothes at San Francisco. I remember nearly "starving" on what we had thought to be a short trip from San Francisco to Los Angeles. It proved to be a whole day's trip. There was no dining car, and we had provided ourselves with no lunch. Again, I remember nearly "roasting" alive the night at Catalina Islands. Just like any tenderfoot, I had sat out unprotected on the deck as we were going over on the boat and I was severely sun-burned. I didn't sleep all night. I was most miserable in spite of much greasing with magnetic ointment. My skin was very red and peeling for some time. I had worn a thin Swiss blouse with heavier embroidery stripes. Thus, I burned in streaks, which I retained for several weeks.

By morning I was a little less miserable and we took the ride in the glass-bottomed boat. I shall always remember the amazing submarine sights we saw. It was like a fairyland. We kept our eyes glued to the aperture, below which appeared a kaleidoscope of changing scenes. Seaweed in graceful festoons, interspersed with mosses and balls of kelp, with large and small fishes in all colors of the rainbow swimming gracefully in and out among the vegetation, and with glimpses of colorful abalone shells in between on the sea floor. I was so engrossed with the changing pictures that I forgot my burning back.

Coming back to shore, we were besieged by a group of sun-tanned boys, who begged us to throw coins into the sea that they might dive for them.

Back in Long Beach I remember the hospitality of friends who had formerly lived in Iowa, the Winders, the Kendigs, the James', the Keipps, the Harrahs, the Mannings.

The Mannings took us to the beach in their new car. I was much impressed with the surging ocean and the life along the water front, to say nothing of the car ride. It was the first time I had ever been in an automobile, and as we "sped" along through the city streets, I felt the ultimate had been reached in transportation luxury and efficiency.

We came home the southern route. By spells we were most miserable. Air conditioning of cars was, of course, far in the future. So far as I know, nobody had ever dreamed of its possibility. We had to ventilate with open windows which admitted all the heat from the scorching sun outside, smoke and cinders from the engine, and dust whipped up from the dry land by a high wind.

The most interesting stop en route was at Albuquerque. We stayed all night here and spent the late afternoon and evening wandering about the station, buying trinkets made of pottery and beads, and watching the skilful Indians weave the rare and lovely Navajo rugs.

The Mississippi valley never looked so beautiful as it did that morning in September when we awakened and looked out upon what appeared to be a huge green park. Until the trip to the West, I had never realized what it meant to live in a section of the country where in normal times it rains in sufficient quantities to make things grow and flourish without irrigation. With the green pastures, the corn fields just beginning to turn brown, the leaves of the trees barely starting to show signs of the gorgeous fall coloring just ahead, it was something to keep our eyes fastened to the windows of the car all day. Make no mistake! The rolling plains of the middle west are lovely to look upon.

The next trip was unique. In 1908 the government held a lottery of public lands in Dallas, South Dakota. One morning Anzey appeared in my school room as I was engaged in wiping the tears from the eyes of little Enid who had just suffered a bad fall. I could see that Anzey was on the qui vive with suppressed excitement.

When the little girl had been comforted and sent out to play again, Anzey said, "Grace, let's go to Dakota and register for a claim."

"Register for a claim," I exclaimed incredulously, "we two girls?"

Then she explained that her brother John and several of his friends were going and suggested that we might like to go along. "You know, Grace," she said, "Nothing could happen to us with them along."

The children came in and Anzey had to go, but that evening we talked more.

Why in the end I decided to go on that reckless goose chase I'll never know. If my number had appeared as one of the lucky ones, I can't imagine myself moving out on 1 lone 160 acres of land, building myself a shack on the open prairie, rounding up a herd with chickens and cows and pigs, and settling myself for a period of years while I proved up on my land. But everyone was talking about the adventure. I was twenty-three years old and looking for excitement, and was not inclined to look too far into the future. I decided to go.

Superintendent Hunt was a human sort of individual and permitted us to arrange substitutes for one day so that we could leave Colfax Friday morning. We returned Sunday evening. These three days were packed with fun and excitement. Each of us optimistically rented a pillow, but a few cat naps were all we managed to secure throughout the trip.

At Omaha we boarded the excursion train from the south. The train now consisted of two sections transporting about a thousand people of all ages and descriptions, each one bent on receiving a lucky number at the drawing. There were no sleepers or diners. The train was packed and crowds milled through the aisles day and night. We tried to let food substitute for sleep. According to my diary, I was hungry all the time. At every station there were sandwiches and coffee for sale and we embraced every opportunity to get a share. With a thousand hungry people competing, we did not always meet with success.

Anzey and I were glad that girls were in the minority. We fared comparatively well without having to elbow our way through the crowd and grab for food. The men gallantly vied with one another to see who could have the honor of treating us girls with food, cold drinks, and souvenirs.

We sang and talked and bantered, both going and returning. We distributed slips of paper and took a straw vote to see who was going to be elected president in November. Our candidate, Bryan, won over Taft both times. Apparently we did not represent a typical cross-section of the voters.

All at once, just fourteen miles from our destination, our train slowed down and stopped. A wreck ahead delayed us for three hours. A wreck was all it took to make our trip complete. But at the wreck we suffered for lack of food, as it was just dinner time and, unfortunately, there was not even coffee and sandwiches being served on the open prairie. Our crowd finally walked about a half mile to a farm house and begged a "hand out." It was the best food I ever ate.

We arrived at Dallas at 3:30 P.M. It had taken us thirty hours to get to Dallas. It took about ten minutes to register. The thousand would-be land holders roamed the streets and bought souvenirs until train time at 7:30.

The fun continued unabated throughout another night until we left the main excursion train at Omaha.

When we returned home, Anzey and I figured up our assets and liabilities, as affected by the trip. On the credit side we decided to place the fact that we had had the best time of our lives. Later we each decided to place on the credit side the fact that our number did not come up as one of the lucky ones. We were thus spared the necessity of deciding what to do with what to us would have been a very "white elephant."

As to the debit side of the ledger, we found we were out car fare, plus sixty cents. We chewed our pencils and thought hard, but could think of nothing else to record as debit. I didn't want to record publicly, or even report to Anzey, that, as a personal debit item, I had lost my heart to a charming young land-seeker from St. Joe. It proved only a temporary loss, so this part of the account gradually came into balance anyway.

CHAPTER XXX

We Buy The Buick

In 1899 an automobile was exhibited at the State Fair at Des Moines. By 1907 these "horseless carriages" were beginning to put in an appearance in our town.

Father was unimpressed. In fact, he was highly incensed to think that anyone would have the audacity to drive one of those "contraptions" on the streets of the city and on the open roads.

"One thing sure," he said, wrathfully, "You'll never catch me buying one. There ought to be a law to keep such internal machines off the roads--scaring the horses. It's dangerous."

It was true. In the early days, motorists usually stopped when meeting a horse drawn vehicle. If the horse were particularly skittish, the driver would even get out of his car and obligingly lead the animal safely past. Horses in the field would sometimes stand watching until the cars were alongside, then with a toss of the head, would snort with fear, turn, and race to the far side of the pasture. A group of irate farmers went to Des Moines to appeal to the legislature to forbid the use of such utterly ridiculous vehicles on roads that "had been made for horses."

But Father's pronounced irritation was short lived. We scarcely realized that he was changing his mind, when we came home one day and there, drawn up on the lawn by the back door was a resplendent, gleaming new car, a Buick---the proudest possession of our lives.

We rubbed our hands along the smooth maroon paint, the shining brass trimmings and the leather seat cushions, until Father came out and told us we should keep our hands off. After he had paid \$1400, a small fortune, for a fine car, he didn't want the finish ruined with finger marks."

Then we all stood with hands behind us and admired in silence. A group of our friends soon formed and we passed the word on to them not to touch the car. We glowed with pride when each person who joined the group looked on with undisguised admiration and envy and exclaimed, "Gee! aint it swell?"

We would not have believed that day that in four years Father would not be satisfied with the two cylinder car. He would have to have one of the new fours that were on the market. After we got the new car, the old one, while we kept it, was held in contempt. We called it the "local." The new car was the "limited." Now we had a smooth running car with a cylinder for each stroke of the engine. We did not realize at that later date that our four would swiftly be outmoded, because, among other things, it had no self starter.

After Father got proficient in driving the car (the first one), had learned that he did not need to maintain a tight rein on the twenty-two horses involved, and had found that the terms "Gee" and "Haw" were not effective terms to use in controlling this particular type of horse, and when he found how much ground the car could cover in a short time, he began to plan another trip.

In the summer of 1909 he made the announcement one Thursday that on Tuesday of the next week he would start for Colorado in the car. We blinked our eyes incredulously, but said nothing--immediately.

Jess and Docia were now in eastern Colorado on a homestead and gave enthusiastic accounts of the climate and of the possibilities for success and prosperity in this dry land country. Father must see.

With equipment, Father figured a capacity load would include four passengers, Mother, Father, and Leo, with Dick for a driver. But as plans materialized, I became more and more enthusiastic about the trip, and finally screwed up my courage to ask if it wouldn't be possible for me to go too. Five in the car, with all the "impedimenta" was a problem. There was no trunk or storage space of any kind on the Buick. But Father could always figure something out. After due deliberation, he decided we could manage.

The "impedimenta" consisted of a tent, sleeping equipment, cooking supplies, tools and gadgets to keep the car going safely and efficiently, and clothing for five to last for three months. To make room for me the "impedimenta" had to be reduced.

We laid out what we needed in the line of clothes, but had to go through the pile again and again, deleting first one essential article, then another. First we provided ourselves with adequate supplies, then reduced them to emergency provisions, and finally to subsistence level. Father assured us that we were going to see, not to be seen, but as for us girls, we felt more than a little unhappy about the restricted wardrobe.

One article each of us women took was a long wide chiffon scarf to tie over her hat. This was essential since the Buick had no wind shield, and a

vehicle travelling at the rate we would go would create a terrific amount of wind. Even with the scarves, it was not always too pleasant.

Dick and Father spent part of their preparation time making and installing a safety device.

Father said, "I don't want to take any chances of running backward down hill if the engine kills and the brakes fail to take hold."

So the men cleverly suspended a long crow bar underneath the car in such a way that it could be controlled by a cord from the driver's seat. In case of emergency, the sharp end was loosened and dropped to the ground. If the car started backward, the rod gouged itself into the ground in no uncertain manner. Though seldom used this extra brake was most effective insurance and served to secure peace of mind for Father.

When we were finally loaded and took a survey of the load, we did not wonder afterward when we observed that people turned to stare at us as we rode along, or that barking dogs followed us for miles. Contrary to what Father had said we were being seen.

Father had a large "grub box" constructed of galvanized iron which was bolted to one of the steps. This contained dishes, cooking utensils, food and a small gasoline stove. The bedding was rolled in the tent and the roll was tied in some way to the rear of the car. Suit cases reposed on either side of the hood, with an army cot surmounting each. The men took care of two water bottles in front. They had to prop their feet against these bottles to keep them from falling out as, unfortunately, the Buick had no front doors. We three women were wedged in among the remaining odds and ends in the rear seat. Among these troublesome articles were the toilet case and the ubiquitous medicine box, which Mother insisted we must have. We could see out by craning our necks, but we could not extricate our feet at unloading times without a considerable amount of trouble.

On the appointed day, after having succeeded in these few days in washing, ironing, mending and packing, and of course sandwiching in church affairs on Sunday, we were ready to climb into the car in the late afternoon.

Men are so slow. We girls were ready and had settled ourselves uncomfortably in the back seat before the men had finished with the final checking of the car. We watched and listened languidly as they went about it, very glad that we could finally just sit and rest.

Father said, "I'll look to see if there is enough water in the aceteline tank. We don't want our good bright head lights to go bad on us. Dick, you make sure there is kerosene in the tail light and those other two parking lights in front."

"I just did that," Dick said, "I'll see if there is enough gasoline in the tank." He unscrewed a cap, which was on the hood, and inserted a yard stick into the tank below. "Yes," he said, "the tank is full. Guess I had better throw this yard stick into the car to use on the way. Hadn't I?"

"Good idea, if you can find room," Father chuckled.

Father checked the engine for oil. He had to take out the front seat cushions, for the engine was under the front seat. We were glad it wasn't under the rear seat. We were too uncomfortably comfortable to think of going through what it took to get up and get out.

We thought we were lucky to have a two cylinder engine. We had heard that some of the early cars had only one.

I suppose the first engineers thought, "Why have more, when one cylinder can perform all the strokes, intake, compression, power, and exhaust?" But from our point of view it added to the elegance of our car to have two.

Engine and gas tank had to be close together and arranged so that the tank

was higher than the engine, since the gas found its way to the engine by gravity. As yet no one had thought of the idea of a vacuum feed so that the gas tank could be placed out of the way in the rear.

Dick used the tire tester and the hand pump to secure proper pressure in the tires, about seventy-five pounds. The tires were small, about four inches in diameter. Another thing that no one had yet dreamed up was the low pressure balloon tires. But our high pressure pneumatic tires, even though small, were so much less jouncy than the old hard rubber tires on fine carriages had been, that we felt proud of our tires too.

One chore that the men didn't have was to check the storage battery. There was none. We didn't need any. The necessary spark to ignite the gas, Father said, was furnished by the magneto, a small generator. The current produced was delivered through coils directly to the spark plugs on the engine. The magneto sufficed except for starting. Dry cells were used for this. According to the men, the magneto did not produce electricity until after the car was running.

That was the only electricity we needed. We had no heater, no radio, no guages, no wind shield wiper, no automatic starter, so a storage battery would have been just of nuisance value, just something to run down.

After a quick wash up Father climbed into the driver's seat, and Dick was delegated to start the car. He took the crank and inserted it in an opening in the right side of the car.

"See that the key is turned onto the dry cells, Pa," he said, "and don't forget to retard the spark and advance the gas before I try to turn the engine over. I don't want to break an arm before we get started." Starting the Buick was a project to be attacked with care and caution.

A short quick turning of the crank made the engine sputter, but in spite of the fact that Father now quickly used the levers on the steering wheel to reverse the process, advance the spark and retard the gas, it took several trials before the engine decided jerkily to keep going on its own.

Father pressed the proper foot pedal to put the car in low gear, moved the hand lever at the right to put us in high, (We had no intermediate) Dick jumped in beside Father, and we were off.

Father's hands were kept busy. Besides steering the car, he must now turn the key from the dry cell position to magneto. We must preserve the batteries for starting. He had to continue to use his hands to control the spark and the gas. No such thing as automatic spark then and no foot feed for gas.

All the way through town Dick made sure every one was aware of our leave taking. He kept squeezing the bulb on the dash board which sounded the honker, and every one dashed out to wave and shout "Goodbyes" and hopes for a good and safe trip.

CHAPTER XXXI

We Try Out The Buick

Our joys and trials and tribulations on the way to Colorado can best be shown by recording extracts from a diary written as we "sped" along.

Tue. 10; Arrived at Des Moines. Decided to stay all night at Aunt Lib's as the brake was not working just right. The night was stifling. Leo and I could not sleep. We were not used to the city heat.

Wed. 11: The men went to town to get the brake fixed, but didn't get back until so late we didn't get started until late afternoon again.

Just outside of Adel we drove out to the side of the road, took down one of our cots for a table, made tea on Pa's stove, and ate our first supper. Enjoyed it fine.

We drove on for a few miles, came to a shady barn yard and camped for the night. Dick and Pa fixed up the tent, put up the cots for the folks to sleep on, borrowed some hay to spread on the ground for beds for the rest of us, bought some eggs and cream, and we retired.

Thur. 12; Got up at daylight, washed ourselves in the tin basin, and had our first experience at combing our hair sitting on the auto step and holding our small mirror between our knees. We were not entirely satisfied with the results. Made coffee and fried eggs. Accomplished the "impossible" feat of getting all that stuff back into the car again. The men had to oil and fix the machine, so we didn't get started very early. I was sick all night and didn't feel very well this morning.

Ate dinner a few miles out of Stuart. My! but it was hot. We tried to sleep awhile after we ate, but gave it up and drove on. On through Casey and were making for Adair when misfortune over took us. We had a flat tire. Luckily for us we happened to be near shade, but in spite of that we nearly suffocated while the men were patching the tire. I was sick and felt terrible.

Dick was pumping up the tire and amusing himself by calling me names when there was a terrific report and another blow-out. That meant about two more hours for us. I was almost ready to go back home.

Got the tire fixed at last, loaded and started. We were just about half way from Adair to Anita when we heard a whistling sound and found another flat tire, the third for the day. We just drove into a nice, grassy barnyard and put up for the night. Dick and Father showed off the car to the interested farmer and his men. We sat in the hammock and talked to the two girls of the household for a while and then went to bed on our pallet of hay. Had a nice place, and slept fine. The night before our feet had been higher than our heads.

Fri. 13; Up early and started on. At Atlantic we stopped to get our extra tire repaired. The men were getting tired of doing the patching themselves. Bought supplies to eat, and we women folks had ice cream. While we were waiting for the tire, Pa skirmished around and found a man who had driven to Colorado with the Glidden tour group the previous summer. This man told us that we would probably still see remains of the confetti which the leading cars had thrown out at the corners to show the ones in the rear which way to turn. He gave us a book which these tourists had compiled which contained minute directions as to the road from Omaha.

(This book was a god-send. No roads in this part of the country were marked at that time. People up to this time had just depended on their memory supplemented by a sort of sixth sense to guide them on their way if the distance were short. For such a long trip the sixth sense would probably have been slightly inadequate, but with the book we were all set.

Samples of directions given follows: "White church on the left. Turn right at next four corners." "Go three miles. Pass large house with green shutters. Turn left at next corner." "Follow road for six miles." "Cross bridge. Old mill at left." "Continue two miles and turn right. Observe white school house quarter mile up the road to the left." "Go up a long hill. Turn right at top of hill." "Go two miles and turn left at tumble down barn.")

After we got the book there was keen competition to see which one of us would hold it and watch for the land marks.

We bought chains for the tires at Atlantic. The Glidden tourist advised it. Also had the machine trued.

Sat. 14; Stopped at Elkhorn for a block and tackle. Pa had heard tales of the fantastic amounts some people were charging for pulling cars out of the mud. He did not propose to lay himself open to that kind of graft. We girls were curious as to what a block and tackle was. Father showed it to us and explained that it was a system of ropes and pulleys so constructed that each of us girls could pull several times as much weight with it as we could without it. Same with men. He said he wanted to make the tour of us equivalent to eight in pulling power.

"Ma," he said, "will sit in the car and boss." It all sounded interesting. We hoped it would not be too long before we should have the good fortune to get stuck.

In the afternoon we had terribly hot winds. We found we would follow the Platte River across the entire state of Nebraska. We were just nearing Columbus when all at once we heard a noise and looking out, we saw the rings that held one of the tires in place, rolling into the fence at the side of the road. Of course, that showed a flat tire and we found both inside and outside casings well rimmed. The cement sealing the inner tube had apparently melted from the heat. We ran the car under some trees and Pa telephoned for a new tire which came out very soon. While it was being installed, we got supper in a nice grassy yard.

At Columbus we bought supplies. This was surely a nice little place. Leo and I especially liked the boys at the garage. Stopped to stay all night just outside Duncan, and here we chose camp very unfortunately. The place we selected was down in a hollow and in a grove. As we drove in, our ears were assailed with a very unfriendly buzzing, and we soon found the mosquitoes were waging war against us for our intrusion. We wrapped our heads up, and yet our tormentors would find every exposed place. Dick cooked up fantastic tales as to how large the mosquitoes were.

We got no peace even when we went to bed and we hardly slept until one o'clock in spite of smudges and cigar smoke. Dick, ever helpful, advised the use of sweet annis from the medicine box to alleviate our suffering. We tried this to our sorrow. It burns. I noticed Dick didn't try the experiment, himself. It was potent but ineffective for keeping the mosquitoes at a distance. Pa snored awhile but finally got up with the startling announcement that he "itched."

Sun. 15; Got out of camp just as soon as possible, which was about seven o'clock. Didn't get along very fast for a while, as the engine was missing. Stopped and cleaned spark plugs, then the car ran fine. We ran from Shelton to Gibbon, a distance of seven miles, in fifteen minutes. This meant, of course, a speed of 28 miles an hour. The road was excellent and straight, and Dick certainly let the car out. Pa pretended not to notice how fast we were going. He had previously given out the edict that the car was never under any circumstances to be driven more than fifteen miles an hour. "That is fast enough to go racing through the country," he had said.

Outside of Odessa we found a fine place to camp. The people invited us in and we played and sang a while before going to bed.

Mon. 16; Today we began to come into the "wild and woolly country." Corn is smaller and it is pretty dry in places. Went a distance of about thirty-five miles between towns. Rode along the bluffs which were beautiful. Passed over several irrigation ditches, the first we had ever seen. Still have hot winds.

That Dick! Leo could have killed him today! In filling the water bottles at a pump, he broke a small piece out of one of them, right at the bulge. The rascal immediately thought of a trick to play on one of us. He filled the bottle as usual and brought it to the car. We were all thirsty. He handed it to Leo with the broken place toward her. She didn't notice anything wrong, tipped the bottle up to drink, rustic style, and was deluged with the contents. Startled, she involuntarily threw the bottle into the road where it was broken into a thousand pieces.

"Now", said Dick, in mock disgust, "see what you have done. You have broken one of our bottles."

Leo couldn't figure out what had happened. She couldn't believe that the water had come out of the neck in regulation manner, but what could have happened? It was too good a joke to keep and finally we pieced together the hints Dick gave out, and solved the mystery.

Dick had had his joke, but he was pretty much in disarray for the rest of the day. No one appreciated the joke except him. Mother was somewhat disgruntled because the bottle was totally destroyed. He had figured that with care he could manage to use it the rest of the trip. Mother didn't like the idea that Leo

had received a good soaking. Leo and I were more and more incensed. We spent the afternoon figuring ways and means of getting even.

At North Platte we changed time. We turned our watches back an hour, all except Father. He kept Central Time throughout the trip and during the whole time he was in Colorado. He was going by God's time, he said.

As we drew into North Platte, we heard an alarming clanging noise under the car, and the car stopped dead still. Dick got out and looked under the car, and found the drive chain broken.

Fortunately, there was a Buick garage here and we were able to replace the broken chain. We girls asked Pa what made the car stop. He told us that the chain was what transferred the power from the engine to the rear wheels. "When it broke," he said, "there was nothing to make the wheels go round."

We ate dinner today in an alfalfa field. It was hard to find a grassy spot. Trees were now few and far between. Camped tonight where there was a house full of children and a yard full of sand burrs. We had to use corn stalks for bedding.

Tues. 17; Looked like rain so we hurried our preparations. At Southerland we stopped for gas and had gone just about two miles when Pa discovered he had lost his Masonic charm. Failed to find it where we filled with gas, so we women stayed at the hotel while the men went back to our camping place at North Platte. Took about two hours, but Father found his precious charm.

Met the Hoatsons at Southerland. They were just ready to start on a trip to Cheyenne in their car, so we asked them to go along with us.

Surely passed over some bad roads today. They wound over the prairie and down banks almost perpendicular, with deep heavy sand at the bottom and just as steep a hill to climb on the other side. We all got out and walked to make it easier on the car. It had hard pulling, but at last got through, and so also did the Hoatson car.

That night when both cars camped for the night, the Hoatsons learned the mystery of how we had known the road so well.

Wed. 18; Just before we got to Julesburg, we had a blow-out again and had to stop and change tires. Here our friends left us. From here on we had rough, hard roads almost all day.

At Iliff we stopped to make a number for the car, as we had lost ours. This new number was a noisy one, as Dick made it out of tin and it hung so low it struck the ruts.

As we left Sterling, it looked threatening as if it might rain, and before we were through eating it had begun to sprinkle. We hurried our packing and started out through Atwood and to Merino as fast as we could see to go in the rain. At one place we headed the car into the rain and got out and put up the side curtains. It took only about fifteen minutes and we were then a little more comfortable. We couldn't see so well but there were isinglass windows which helped some. Of course it was out of the question to camp, so we got rooms at the hotel in Merino. It seemed very stuffy after sleeping in the open air. Rained all night.

Thur. Aug. 19; Paid fifty cents each for breakfast. A lot!

Found the coils were wet and the car refused to start. Took some time before we got started, and when we did, we had bad going. We would put on the chains and then take them off. We would come to some places that were worse than Iowa mud. Telephone wires here are just strung along fence posts.

Saw lots of prairie dogs which would stand upright on the prairie. Pa tried to shoot some of them but they were too quick for him. At the sound of the car they would whisk into their holes and disappear in short order. We saw ant hills a foot high, and huge cactus plants such as we had never seen before. We saw sod houses,

and piles of tumbleweeds blown against the fences.

As we entered one small town, Dick swung out to the side of the road to avoid the mud, but we got into it worse than ever and had to use our block and tackle for the first time. Pulled out at last with the help of some boys who happened along just then. Pa bragged that we had outwitted the overcharging teamsters.

We were just about to cross the track at Fort Morgan when a man came running and told us there was a flooded dry creek on that road, which we could not cross. He directed us back north and west to the town of Wiggins, which was several miles out of our way. Worst of it was, we never did get to see the "house with the green shutters."

Ate at a homesteader's place. Looked as if it might rain, but we started on as we only had about twenty-five miles to go to get to Bennett and we thought perhaps we might make it that night.

We had not far to go before our troubles began. We came to a creek which had to be forded. In we went, but not out---right away. We had to hitch up our block and tackle again to pull ourselves out. Three men were kind enough to sit on the bank and watch us tugging at the ropes--no doubt some of the "grafters."

In a few minutes we struck across the wild open prairie. By this time it was dark. Dick stopped the car and he and Father got out and lighted the lights. Took a little time to find matches, but at last we had the three kerosene lights going. The men had some trouble to get the carbide head lights to going, but at last they shone out brightly. We were lucky to have such good lights.

Very hard pulling for the machine. Some places which looked perfectly dry proved to be deep, sticky mud. On we went the best we could in the mud and dark. Once we struck the wrong trail and had to back up for a considerable distance. Every few minutes Pa would walk on with the lantern to see if it was safe to go on. Several more times we had to ford small streams. At last we gave up and decided to camp on the open prairie since we could not tell what we were coming to.

None of us undressed. We could hear the coyotes and prairie dogs in the distance, and there was not a light, or fence or mark of any kind to be seen. Dick took the revolver and said that he would sit up in the front seat and guard. Pa tried to sleep in the back seat. We three women had the army cots. Leo and I shared one. In the middle of the night I happened to put my hand out, and there on a blanket on the ground was "the guard," fast asleep.

Fri. 20; In the morning we found we were in a treeless, rolling prairie, but we could by daylight see a couple of little shack houses. Soon we came to a creek where there should have been a bridge, but found none. We stopped to get our bearings and had our breakfast. Pa said he guessed he would go to a ranch close by and get some cream.

"I'll be back by the time you get breakfast ready," he said.

Breakfast ready, we waited a while and decided we had better eat. Again we waited. After about an hour, Pa came dragging in with the cream. We asked him what had kept him so long.

"I don't understand," he said, "I walked and walked and never got any nearer to that fool house. It looks so close, but it must be at least two miles away." (That was our first lesson on the distance illusion, which is a characteristic of Colorado.)

Dick had been reconnoitering during Father's morning walk and found a place where we could ford the stream even without the use of the block and tackle.

We were told that we would find good roads from here on, but we were doomed to disappointment, for very soon we drove into a mud hole where we had to use our block and tackle again. This was a bad one. We needed more power than the two teams our people w/ were supposed to be out with the block and tackle. So we got out and began consulting as the rest of the

two men, it was decided to trust me (a mere woman and fairly young at that) to steer the car so that the power of the engine could supplement the hand pulling. The men started up the engine, showed me how to change gears (neutral to low with the foot pedal, then to high with the lever at the right of the driver.) They gave implicit instructions as to how to stop the car when we finally got across the mud hole.

With much fear and trembling by all concerned I did my job. The car pulled out with little trouble and I got the car stopped as per instructions.

Just before we entered Bennett, we arrived at Kiowa Creek, perhaps fifty feet wide, bank full of water and running swiftly. It was the largest and angriest looking creek we had encountered. There was nothing to do except plunge in. In mid-stream we stuck. The bottom was soft. This time, even with me in the driver's seat, the man power furnished by the three others, plus the man power furnished by the trusty block and tackle, plus the machine power, the car refused to budge.

Soon a man came along on horse back. He dismounted and lent a hand, but nothing happened. Everyone stopped to think. At last the strange man had an idea.

"I believe my pony can do the trick," he said. My father looked skeptical, but said nothing. The pulling end of the rope was attached to the horn of the saddle. Machine, horse, men and women began to pull. The beautiful pony dug her little feet into the mud, snorted a little, contracted her slight but powerful muscles, and the car began to move. Gradually we approached and at last reached the other side. Each of us took turns in patting and feeding the little western pony and in expressing our thanks to the good gentleman.

Through Bennett and out almost a mile to Jesse's home. Our honker was full of water, so we could not make much noise, but we soon apprised Docia of our presence. We were so exhausted that we ate our dinner and piled into bed until the boys arrived from work.

Everyone thought we had made excellent time. "Why, it is only ten days since you left Colfax," they said, "You made seventy-five or eighty miles a day. With a team it would have taken at least twice that long. And remember, you are practically a mile high, so you were coming up hill most of the time."

When we told them of our "harrowing" night on the prairie, they all laughed uproariously. We were non-plussed. We thought they should express concern as to what might have happened to us, especially since our sentinel had been so remiss as to have fallen asleep at his post.

"Why, the prairie is the safest place in the world," said Jesse, when the laughing ceased. "Nothing could have happened to you. Your fear is only the first sign that you are 'tenderfeet.'"

CHAPTER XXXII

Tenderfeet

There were many ways in which we had to get accustomed to Colorado--to get over being "tenderfeet."

We tried to help Docia with the cooking for the gang and found Colorado had its ways even with respect to this art. In preparing that first dinner, Docia asked me to get some milk and butter for the cake. "You'll find the refrigerator in the north window of the bed room," she said. I looked at her and blinked my eyes, but she went on measuring out the dry ingredients, seemingly oblivious to the fact that there was anything unusual in her statement.

With a considerable amount of perplexity I went ahead. I found the butter and cream all right, but such a refrigerator! There was a shallow pan containing about an inch and a half of water into which had been set the jars containing the various foods. Once the top of the jars, with edges drooping down into the water on all sides, was a large cloth. If the jars fell they were safe to the touch.

I observed the butter. It was hard and upstanding. I carried the jars to Dacia.

"This is magic to me," I said, "Why are these things cold?"

"Oh, tenderfoot!" she laughed as she suspended her operations on the cake. "It's evaporation. You see water evaporates fast in this dry, windy Colorado air. There is no ice for sale short of Denver, so we use evaporation."

She finished the cake while I figured it out. Of course, I thought, if I wet my finger and hold it in a breeze, my finger will get cold. I remembered then that Mr. Mishler had told us in physics class that changing from liquid to gas absorbs heat from surrounding materials, but who would have thought that principle would ever be of use, least of all that it could be used to keep food cold on the Colorado prairie. Little did Dacia or I realize that years later the same principle would be used in our electric and gas refrigerators to actually freeze ice on hot summer days.

At the time I mused farther and ferreted from my memory another principle involved. "The cloth dips down into the water all around so that the water can rise by "capillary action," and thus keep the cloth wet," I thought. It all made sense. No black magic about that.

Dacia had asked Leo to cook the potatoes while she baked the cake. Dinner was late that day. Leo allowed the time that was usual in Iowa to make the potatoes nice and mealy. When the family arrived and Leo prodded the potatoes, she found them quite hard. Jesse laughed at her.

"Tenderfoot!" he said, "Don't you know that water is not very hot when it boils out here? It takes longer to cook things in this light atmosphere."

Leo was crestfallen. She knew she should have thought of that. She and I remembered, now that it was too late, how Mr. Mishler had made fairly cool water boil in the physics class, by using the air pump to exhaust the air. But again, who would have thought that principle would be of any use, that failure to consider it would make dinner late for a family on the Colorado plateau?

A few days after our arrival, Dacia announced that we would have a picnic on the creek. That didn't seem so startling until we discovered that what she meant was that we would have it in the creek. The same Kiowa creek which we had with difficulty forded with the help of the little western pony, was now dry enough for us to spread our picnic on the sand of the creek bed and play our games there. Thus we tenderfeet learned that a creek in Colorado, except for short periods after a hard rain, is not a creek according to our Iowa interpretation of the term. As we picnicked, we were interested to dig down in the sand a few inches and find pools of water which according to an Iowa mind, should have been running on the surface.

We were tenderfeet again when we took a trip into the mountains in the car. Something seemed to be wrong. The radiator boiled at intervals from much running in low gear. The engine coughed and stopped from the hear.

Father said, "By the eternals! I can't figure out what is wrong with this car. We're even going down grade now, and still we're in low gear."

Jesse's eyes twinkled. "Look back, Pa." he said. We all craned our necks to the rear and were amazed to see we were actually going up a stiff grade. "That's what we call an optical illusion," Jesse said learnedly. "All tenderfeet are fooled that way in the mountains."

The two-cylinder Buick finally succeeded by dint of much boiling and resting and back-firing and straining, in making the grade. The passengers had to help at intervals by walking, thus relieving the car of some of its burden. Sometimes they lent assistance to the car by pushing it up a very steep incline.

Jesse stopped the car once to let some air out of the tires. We asked him why. "Do you see all these people along the way pitching tires?" he said. "Most tenderfeet from the East don't know that in this light atmosphere the pressure becomes so great on the inside of the tire, as compared with the air pressure out-

side that tire blow-outs become a nuisance. Letting a little air out relieves the pressure." Jesse was loving initiating us into the ways peculiar to Colorado and the mountains.

We had fun in Colorado, much of it fun which was peculiar to Colorado, and of a type we never would have had on the Iowa plains. These various experiences changed us in a few short weeks from "Tenderfeet" to Colorado "sophisticates."

We became accustomed to the crisp, fresh, invigorating air, clear as crystal, with no haze to obscure the view. Homes miles away stood out in clearest outline, and even Father realized now that they were much farther away than they appeared to be. He did not attempt morning calls before breakfast. Daily, we feasted our eyes on the view to the west from Jesse's home, where the snow capped mountains rimmed the horizon.

There was a friendliness among the people that is rarely found in more settled communities. People did not know what a stranger was. Though new in the community, it was impossible for anyone to feel strange for long. As for us, we had callers that first evening. We were invited out to dinner the next day. From the dinner we were invited to go to a different ranch for supper and to stay all night. Having only "tenderfeet" hats, we were furnished with cow boy hats to make the trip in the open spring wagon. Thus our social life was initiated. To make it all the more enjoyable to two girls in their twenties, the boys in the community outnumbered the girls. In our particular orbit there were six; Arle and Gayle in our family; Docia's cousins, John and Ogden, plus Bert and Charley, who owned the store, and who immediately annexed us as their special charges.

Bert and Charley took us rabbit hunting in their carriage Sunday afternoons. On these days Bert carried a knife with him so that he could jump out immediately and skin the game. Then he would return with our catches to the boys' home where their sister, Rose, was keeping house. We would all co-operate and prepare a fine rabbit supper.

We liked to walk up to the store for groceries in the afternoons. There was always so much going on. If we waited long enough, the boys would hitch up the team and bring us home. At first we were "tenderfeet" again. We didn't take a wrap with us. No one from Iowa could believe that after such a hot day, it could be so cold when the sun went down. Docia warned us, but we didn't believe her. So we had to find out for ourselves. A couple of times was enough to "toughen our feet" in that respect.

Once a group of young people went camping at Emily's cabin in the mountains. We went part of the way by train, bought supplies, then hired a wagon to take us up to Sugar Loaf. While we girls busied ourselves putting the culinary department to rights, the boys chopped wood, coaxed the stove into a blaze and then prepared our beds. They cut pine boughs and filled the "beds," which resembled nothing so much as the large, rough bins we used at home to store our vegetables in. We slept in these "bins." The beds made up in sweet scent what they lacked in softness.

We ate so much while we were camping that we had to spend a large part of our time cooking, but we did find time to do a little climbing. One day we climbed Sugar Loaf. The next day we were scarcely able to walk, even on level ground. "Tenderfeet" again! Old timers said we should have undertaken our climbing gradually.

During the summer we took trips to Denver and ate at fashionable restaurants, another new experience. One place that was particularly intriguing was the Edelweiss. We were much impressed with the men waiters all in dress suits, and we thought the food was superb.

We went to dances. When a dance was announced, people would come from miles around. Sometimes we would have the dances in empty hay mows, sometimes in the elevator or school house, sometimes in a garage. In order to make the cement floor of the garage suitable for the pastime, the committee in charge sprinkled it with corn meal. That produced a sort of ball bearing surface that seemed satisfactory to us. Coming after work a distance of fifteen miles or more,

people planned to make a night of it. Usually we danced until midnight, ate a lunch prepared by the committee to provide us the essential second wind, and then we would continue to dance until morning. The folks had to get used to our arriving home about the time the sun was coming up, if they planned to have us live as the gay Romans did. Since Jesse and Docia were at the dances, Father did not object too strenuously, though he never approved. He showed his disapproval in a most cruel manner. When he got up a couple of hours after we had climbed into bed, he would begin to call us and would give us no peace until we had dragged ourselves out and dressed. The morning after was not so pleasant.

Very soon we began to see that in this country there were compensations for a lack of trees and green grass. As time went on, we began to dread for the time to come when we would have to start home.

Then Father bought the land. He had convinced himself that it would be a good investment. He decided it would serve a double or triple purpose for him. His eyes had failed during the past year or so and he could see the time approaching when he would have to give up his law practice. If he had this land, he could spend his summers here and busy himself putting in wheat.

"Then," he explained to Mother, "when I am done with the land, it will be so fine to have it so it can be divided up and furnish almost a quarter section of land for each of the children. I could never hope to do that with the high-priced Iowa land." Mother said nothing, so he went on. "Besides, it will be an interesting venture. I will learn to practice a brand new type of farming, what they call here "dry land farming." Father explained this to us. "You see," he said, "when I first came out and began to talk about farming methods like I had been used to, they called me "Tenderfoot." "Now," he continued, "I have learned that on the Colorado plains there is an average rainfall a little less than half of what we have in Iowa. Most years this isn't enough, so what is received must be conserved by a special method of farming." Then he told us about the method.

This was accomplished, he said, by harrowing after a rain, thus producing a dust mulch. This was supposed to break up the capillaries in the upper surface, which permitted the moisture to rise to the surface and evaporate. Ideally, a field was supposed to lie fallow one season, Father said, and be prepared by successive harrowings to receive the seed the following year. It was the theory that enough moisture would accumulate in this way to suffice for the growing of the crop when it was put in the second year.

Father had a secret notion of his own that as the country developed, the rainfall would increase. I doubt if the science books would agree with him on this score, nor did his later experience justify his belief.

Father had a well put down, put up a windmill, built a shack, bought a tractor and sent for Cousin Jim to come out and plow a portion of the ground in preparation for the next year's crop.

Jim was sort of an "institution" in our lives. Father always sent for him when he needed a man Friday to help him out. Jim was a bachelor and was free to come when Father called. Under Father's supervision, he could do nearly any type of work, though he usually had to do a considerable amount of fussing and grumbling during the process. In order that he might be at hand and able to adapt himself to Father's erratic hours of work, he lived at our house in Colorado. Mother took him under her wing and bossed him around as to his use of "bad words," when he should take baths, et cetera, just as she did us. And Jim grumbled incessantly and loved the supervision.

We were happy about the land and the shack and the tractor. We looked forward to spending a goodly number of our summers in this delightful place, and so we did. During the next decade or so, I believe Father and Mother never missed. The rest of us took our turns according to our ability to make our plans at home. During that time we saw much of the prairie country in Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado settle up, blossom and grow green, much of it under the encouragement of irrigation projects. We traveled hither and thither over the majestic mountains and learned to love them.

But this particular summer had to come to an end. Father announced

one day in late October that his farming was accomplished for the year and that we would be starting home in a few days. Docia honored us girls with a "stag party," as a going away courtesy. There were the honorees and the six boys.

Reluctantly we again laid in supplies of food, washed, ironed and packed. Dick had gone home earlier in the summer, so Father sent for Milo to help him drive and keep the machine going efficiently. Some women were beginning to drive by this time. Leo and I tried to convince Father that we could learn to drive and it would not be necessary to send for Milo, but Father wouldn't agree. "You wouldn't be much good for this kind of job," he said. "I would not think of having you try to crank the car. Even the men and boys sometimes break their arms doing it. It takes strength and skill." The inference was that we could neither muster the strength nor develop the skill. "Besides," he continued, "You could not get under the car to grease it and to fix it if something should go wrong, and you could not jack up the car to remove the tires and patch them." "No," he said with finality, "driving a car is no job for a woman." Then very soberly he added, "Of course if we get stuck in the mud or a creek, I'll let you drive while we pull out." We saw the twinkle in his eye, but we gave up.

The day we left was a sad one. The diary says, "Every one cried, of course, and we did too. Even Gayle and Arle cried."

We saw Father furtively brush his hand across his eyes. Then he brusquely climbed into the high seat beside Milo, and as the car started moving, he began to sing at the top of his voice, "On The Highway Home, On The Highway Home. Happy all the day on the Highway home."

CHAPTER XXXIII

We Reminisce

As our family began to thin out, Mother had time to remember she had a sister who lived in Kansas City. By this time Aunt Margaret's children were all grown and her husband had died. At our house it was unthinkable that the establishment should not be filled to capacity, so, at intervals Father would send for Aunt Margaret to come up for extended visits. She proved to be one of those rare individuals who could settle herself into a household, even into a large exuberant one like ours, without producing a discordant ripple. We loved her. She had her own opinions about how people should conduct themselves, but rarely gave expression to these opinions unless she was asked to do so, a quality we admired very much in others, but which we never seemed to have much success in achieving for ourselves.

After Aunt Margaret came, we learned a great deal about the early history of the two families, the Tripps and Mother's family, the Knapps. Aunt Margaret was a little more inclined to talk than Mother. With her inspiration to initiate reminiscences, Mother became more articulate and, as we all sat and embroidered, she assisted in the narration of a number of interesting stories of the early days. A few of these stand out clearly in my mind.

Grandfather Knapp settled in Story County about ten years after Iowa was admitted as a state. He established himself as a teamster in the town of Cambridge. Towns in that day had just mushroomed over the state on the open prairie or in the wooded portions along the streams. There was no railroad connecting Cambridge with the rest of the world. Consequently, because of the demand, Grandfather found teaming to be a popular and comparatively lucrative vocation.

One winter Grandfather was engaged by the proprietor of the general store to drive to Keokuk, the nearest shipping point, to transport a load of merchandise. I can imagine that Grandfather bade his wife and four young children a rather regretful farewell. He knew that the trip would consume several weeks of time. He knew the hazards due to blizzards which could obliterate the unmarked, unmeted roads. He knew that in all probability Grandmother would give birth to a new son or daughter during his absence. But in pioneer days work could not be held up for dangers or for minor events such as births and deaths.

Grandfather reluctantly doffed his heaviest clothing, put on his felt boots, pulled his fur cap down over his head, fastened his team to the moun-

sled, climbed in, tucked the fur robes around himself and waved an affectionate farewell to the tearful faces collected in the window of his home. He gave the go-ahead cluck to his horses, and he was soon out of sight. Weeks elapsed. Grandfather was delayed because of a warm spell which melted the snow from the roads. The new baby arrived in due time, but Grandmother failed to survive the ordeal---so did the child. A neighbor started out on horse back to intercept the young husband and inform him of his loss, but the rider did not find him, since Grandfather had been forced to take to the fields to find snow in order to proceed with his sled.

Grandfather inched along from day to day, gradually drawing nearer and nearer to his home, glad in anticipation of the welcome which awaited him from his wife and children, and his expected introduction to the new arrival in his household. He arrived to find his wife and babe dead and buried, his family scattered and living in the homes of sympathetic neighbors.

One can only conjecture the grief and despair of this young man, when, after hearing the dire message, he drove to the store, unloaded his merchandise and repaired to the small hotel which must serve as temporary living quarters. Here he found the kindly landlady was caring for my mother, a little girl of eight, and one more of his family.

We children were always in tears at this point in the story, but then Aunt Margaret would say, "Cheer up! Cheer up! The story has a happy ending. Your grandfather later married the sympathetic landlady and lived happily ever after." We sighed with relief. "Yes," Mother put in, "Mrs. Lewis assisted Grandfather in collecting his other children and made us all very happy in our new home. Your grandfather came to think again that life was good." This story was doubly interesting to us younger children, for we never had the good fortune to know from actual experience what it was like to have a grand parent.

Another story that intrigued us was of an incident that occurred when Mother was a young wife. After their marriage Father had done some farming, but he heard of some prairie breaking that was to be done in Carroll County. The wages paid were more attractive than those paid to farm hands, and he determined to apply for work in this "distant" district. Canvas was bought to make a covered wagon. A few housekeeping essentials were installed in the wagon and he started out.

I can imagine there were again tearful faces at the window of the log cabin as Father drove out of the yard. Just outside, there had been a recent wash out. In negotiating the turn onto the road, the wagon tipped over. Mother was panic stricken. She ran out to see that Father was not hurt, then she set her lips in a firm line and said, "That settles it. I am going along."

By the time the wagon was righted, there Mother stood with little Eleanor, coated and hooded, a pile of extra household articles piled at her feet, and ready to be lifted into the wagon. She probably remembered when her father had started out in a similar fashion fifteen years before.

The young couple managed, but there were difficulties. In those days babies never waited for a convenient time in which to put in an appearance. Em's insistence on arriving during this hegira added considerably to the home making difficulties. When, later, the two little girls contracted lung fever, there were a few most anxious and difficult weeks. But unremitting care prevailed over the scantiness of proper nursing equipment. The girls recovered.

Father finally came to the conclusion it was decidedly time for him to stop his nomadic life and settle down. He was getting up in years. At twenty-three it was high time he should see to getting himself rooted, in order to provide a place where his family could feel themselves secure. The family returned temporarily to his father's tenant house.

It was unusual in those days to have such a house. Most of the pioneers felt they did well to construct one house and a barn. Apparently Grandfather thought Grandmother had enough to do to keep house under pioneer conditions and to care for him and his four children, without the added burden of cooking for hired help. At any rate, he had managed to take time off from his farming

and preaching and blacksmithing duties to construct two log houses, one for his own family and one for those who worked for him. Thus the family secured privacy for themselves, and Grandmother Tripp, I am inclined to believe, lived a life of ease as compared with some of the neighboring women. From what I have heard, I have a feeling that Grandfather considered Grandmother somewhat of a "lady," made of too fine and fragile material to be subjected to any more than was absolutely necessary of the pioneer hardships.

"So," said Mother, "Pa began saving money and looking around for a suitable piece of land to buy."

Financing the proposition was a problem. He traded his fine wedding suit for one piece of land. He worked out the price of another. "But," said Mother, "in the end, he had to borrow a considerable amount. Since land by this time was selling high, he was forced to pay as much as thirty-five dollars an acre for part of his farm. By the time he was able to find the view he required and the money to pay for his "view" and his land, two boys, David and Jesse, arrived in the log cabin in quick succession. David died. Father decided he must get moved and settled in his new warm house.

Mother told us more about the house Father had built on the farm. She told us how imposing it looked to her arising from its position on the knoll, and giving a fine view of the open country to the west. From her story, it must have been a great day for Father when he loaded his meager household equipment onto his wagon, gathered up Mother and the three small children and moved them over to his own home.

After hearing her story, in my mind's eye I could see Father as he gazed upon the new house. His face must have glowed with pride. "We are so lucky, Ma," he said, "We have a house made of sawed boards. Twenty-five years ago before the saw mill was put up so close we couldn't have managed."

"No," said Mother, "we would have had to build a house of logs."

"The new house provided a fit and luxurious place," Mother said, "for our other six children to be ushered into this world." So Mother thought. As for me, as she and Aunt Margaret co-operated in telling the story, I thought that Jesse's birth in the log cabin had been much more glamorous than ours. According to American tradition, he should have trodden a path that led straight to the White House. But Jesse was a disappointment to me in that respect. As years went by, I finally came to realize that, in spite of his propitious birth, he was not proceeding in that direction at all.

In later years, by probing around among the old records at the court house, on pages worn and fragile, almost undecipherable, I discovered documents which gave more interesting insights into the life and thinking of my grandfather's time. I discovered a chattel mortgage whose implications were most revealing with regard to financial dealings during the first days of the country. It seems Mr. Besett must have owed my grandfather money. Mr. Franklin owed Mr. Besett. Being possessed of little money for settlements of such obligations, it apparently was the practice of the times to resort to agreements involving trade, exchange or barter. In this particular case, Grandfather needed some prairie broken, so a three-way agreement was entered into which would expeditiously discharge the obligation all around. Grandfather engaged Franklin to break the prairie land. But although Grandfather was a minister, and, from what I can hear, one hundred per cent dependable himself, he apparently did not have implicit faith in all God's creatures. To make sure the work would be accomplished, he required Besett to give him a chattel mortgage on "a yoke of white oxen and two black steers" which Besett owned. This chattel mortgage stands on record in book 4, page 152, in Jasper County court house.

The sod breaking was apparently satisfactorily accomplished since along the margin of the recorded instrument a release of the mortgage dated the 14th day of October, A. D. 1857, is subscribed and duly signed in my grandfather's hand writing. By a few hours of plowing Besett's and Franklin's debts were both discharged and Grandfather had a field ready for his corn.

My day at the court house convinced me that there is much exciting and

seldom disturbed material tucked away in the archives of our country. Any one reduced to the necessity of "killing time" would to my mind, find exploring these fertile fields a very profitable and legitimate way of accomplishing what usually seems such a woeful and unfortunate massacre of a priceless commodity.

We children never tired of listening to these stories of these stories of the early days. We liked the "pioneer" atmosphere they depicted. It never occurred to us that children fifty years hence might read these reminiscences of mine and label them also "pioneer."

CHAPTER XXXIV

Father Builds Again

By this time our large family was gradually becoming small. I don't believe it had ever occurred to Father that the time would come when the family would be broken up. The natural process of disintegration had begun on the farm when Eleanor had been married. It had continued when Em was married and moved to Newton. Then, one after another, as the years went by, the boys were married and established new homes.

Father always hated to see any of the family leave. If he had had his way, they would all have brought their wives and husbands along, Chinese fashion, and settled down with us.

Finally Leo was married.

Everyone who went away left a vacant place, cause for grief and tears, but Leo's going left the big house practically empty, quiet and lonely. Mother and I used to sit in the afternoon and sew while the rest were at school or work. Tears would splash down upon the work we were trying to do.

I remembered Leo's and my quarrels and wondered why I had been so insistent in demanding my own "rights," and I pondered the possibility that in the end it might always give more satisfaction to fight for the other fellow's rights rather than one's own.

In the fall after Leo's marriage, I went of belatedly to Drake University. The next year Lois joined me and Gayle went away to take mechanical training.

Father and Mother and Eleanor found themselves alone in the big house. Then it was that Father got out his paper, his drawing pencil, and his ruler.

"I think, Ma," he said, "we had better begin to plan another house. I feel as if we were just rattling around in this one. It's too big and quiet and orderly here. My voice sounds hollow when I speak." "That west lot of ours has a nice view," he went on after a pause, "Let's build a little house there, so that we three can be closer together."

Mother, for once made no objections.

The first decade and a little more of this century is over. As Father sits scaling out the new house, with Mother close by kibitzing as to size and proportions, the story ends. If it should continue much longer, the reader and the writer would be catapulted into a brand new and different world, among incidents and philosophies which would not feel at home among these memoirs.

We would find ourselves in a world of stress and strain, a world of two terrible wars, of depressions, of world wide unrest, a world of the radio and television, of impossible speedy travel on land and sea and in the air, in a world of atomic fission.

We would find our selves in a world in which telephones and bath tubs and electrical refrigerators and vacuum cleaners would be taken for granted, but in a world where in spite of these luxuries, and in spite of the fact that home owners would insist on the installation of large in-swinging picture windows, they could, in many cases, not thus provide in their houses for safety, convenience, and

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